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To
Mr John Anderson

From
The Author

13 June 1858

ORAN AND OTHER POEMS.



O R A N

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

ALEXANDER T. M'LEAN.

GLASGOW:

THOMAS MURRAY & SON, BUCHANAN STREET.

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LOAN STACK

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PREFATORY.

IN venturing to submit the following Poems to the public, the Author felt a degree of hesitation at undertaking such a step. Some of his minor pieces, however, having been published in several local journals, and having received the approbation of gentlemen whose taste and critical acumen are a sufficient guarantee for the correctness of their judgment, he was encouraged to bring them out in a collected form, together with his more ambitious efforts, which are now published for the first time.

It has always been the Author's aim in his poetry to advance the cause of morality, and to refine and exalt the human mind. In the Poem of "ORAN," on which he expects his title to the high vocation of the Poet will be chiefly considered, he has throughout kept steadily in view three things: first, to avoid the mystical and ambiguous form and expression which are the prevailing objections to modern poetry; second, to express its scope and design in the clearest and most natural style, and, by its treatment, to sustain the interest of its subject to the end; and,

third, to make it the channel of conveying high moral and religious truth. How far he has succeeded in these respects must be left to the judgment of the reader. Whatever merit "ORAN" may possess, it may not be unimportant to state, that this Poem is the result of close and anxious study, and was composed during the intervals of an onerous profession which allowed little leisure for cultivating the favours of the Muse, though its composition afforded the writer a source of high enjoyment.

Believing the vocation of the Critics to be that of fostering and directing the public taste, the Author most respectfully submits his productions for their verdict, satisfied that where merit exists it will be cordially acknowledged, and that where there is reason to condemn, it will be done with a view to correct his faults. In conclusion, he has only to say that he shall be happy to avail himself of their suggestions and advice.

A. T. M'L

LOW CARTCRAIGS,
POLLOKSHAW, *June*, 1857.

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ORAN, AND OTHER POEMS.

Oran.

SCENE FIRST.

A STUDY—ORAN, ALONE—EVENING.

ORAN.

NIGHT comes again, the ever-gorgeous Night,
And on her calm pale brow, her starry gems
Gleam with their ever-wakeful, dazzling blaze,
Like some fair Eastern bride, whose nuptial eve
Hails, richly robed in all the fabled wealth
Of the hot Inds and Araby the blest.
Forth comes the moon, the melancholy moon.
How my heart bleeds as thus I gaze on thee,
So deeply, lonely, is that look of thine—
So full of a heart-sorrow, unexpressed!
Like some poor homeless wanderer of the night,
I cannot look but with a heaving breast,
That owns a sorrow deep and keen as thine;
For thou dost waken maddening thoughts within,
And lead me now to think of what I was,

What am, and what may be. Now, Memory,
Approach, and with thy closely-figured page,
Unfold the past. What scenes now grandly rise?
Again I revel through the childish haunts
Of early years. I see a little band
Whose faces beam with love's serenest smile,
And whose glad voices loudly ring with glee,
Till woods and dells are vocal with their mirth.
'Tis Summer holiday, and now the woods
Have a sweet charm to while away the hours,
As there, secluded 'neath some leafy shade,
They wreath the wild flowerets for each other's hair,
With all the ingenuousness of youthful love.
The scene is changed—that little band is gone :
Some sleep in death, and others, o'er the main,
Have sought a home in some far-distant isle ;
While I alone, of all those happy hearts,
Cling to the barren spot that gave me birth,
And, in my efforts, waste the midnight oil,
And pale my cheeks, and dig an early grave.
Yet, here I've felt what 'twas with bounding heart
To read creation's volume, and look up
With conscious love to Him I owned my Guide;
And claimed as Father of my orphan years.
But, years and scenes have changed, and with them
changed
Am I, poor dreamer on this busy earth :
Oh ! curse of Fate, the greedy thirst for fame,
That leads the poor aspirer ever on,
Until, with one rough blast, the lamp of life

Is quite extinguished, and the heart sealed up—
For evermore unloving and unloved.
What will these anxious hours of care avail?
'Tis all in vain—then better end at once
These harrowing agonies of baffled hopes.
Night after night pent up within this room,
These books my sole companions, and the thought,
My barque is launched upon the flood of Death,
Shrouds my soul, as fear the murderer shrouds,
When his own whispers scare him in the night.
Happy are those whom Fortune gently leads
Through life's serenest scenes, and fills their cup
With the luxurious juice of Pleasure's vine:
But ah! too many, from their infant years,
Are nursed in poverty, and suck the breasts
Of Disappointment, and accursed Neglect.
Poor scions of a noble family,
My heart yearns for you, and I fain would bind
Your lacerated bosoms with the balm
Of heaven-born, soul-soothing sympathy.

But Walter comes not: this is not his wont,
To be a laggard when the hour arrives
For yet another step up the rough cliff,
In search of that rare diamond, whose rich gleam
Should ever after lead our steps right on;
Yet, what achievement will this bosom calm,
And make a resting for the dove of peace?
What gift of Heaven will fill this restless heart,
Till rapt in ecstasy it cry, Enough?
The mind still points, as needle to the pole,

To that dark spot emblazoned on my soul,
Where sank the sun, and left each airy hope
Enclouded with night's robe; then darkness came,
And came with darkness doubt and cold distrust.
The only stars that light the cheerless gloom,
Are Walter and my books; yet, even these
Fail to assuage the gnawing pain that eats
Into the heart like poison; and to hide
The sorrow of my life from him I love,
Is not the love of friends; would he were here,
Then I'd unbosom all this inward strife,
And stand unmasked before him. What a wreck?
Full well I know how sympathy will weep,
And chide me for concealment—well I know
He dreams not, never dreams of life's deceit,
And under-current of hypocrisy,
That man's frail barque full often press and swamp.
Well, here he is—there's joyance in his step,
And in his heart too, as he bounds along,
Like 'raptured lover, fresh from the embrace
Of his world's wealth. [WALTER enters.

Good even to you, friend:

It does me good to see that happy face,
So radiant with joy. What! have you gained
The secret of those long laborious hours,
And now art come to bid me share thy joy?

WALTER.

Yes, Oran, joy with me and bid all speed
To the propitious breeze that swells my sails,

And drives my barque across the sea of hope,
Rich freighted, safely. Ay, Oran, speak.
I'm mad with joy, and feel as if a dream
Hang on my soul; love conquered Anthony
When Cleopatra stabbed him with a smile,
Felt not a joy so keen as that which fills
My heaving bosom with the sweets of life;
And if it be a dream, I would dream on,
And never wish to ope mine eyes again,
If life be not a pleasant, happy dream,
With all the witchery of Elfinland.

ORAN.

What draught of pleasure, Walter, has inflamed
That calm and tranquil bosom, and engirt
A happy, beamy smile upon thy lip?

WALTER.

To-night we'll toss our studies to the winds.
I could not rise an inch 'bove earth to-night,
Though full upon our gaze the prize of years
Glared comet-like. If ever thou hast felt
The sweet emotions that upheave the soul,
When first we know we love, and are beloved,
Then take me to thy bosom and partake
Of the wild tremor that has seized my heart,
And give God's benison upon my joy.
Ah! Oran, how I feel a fear, a dread,
A wordless something's here as if I dreamed,
And longed to gaze with wakeful eyes upon
The whirling scenes that hasten through my mind.

ORAN.

Walter, I tell thee life is not a dream,
•But, ah! a stern reality of things.
A dream, forsooth? methinks, indeed, they dream,
And are as babes swathed in their swaddling clothes,
Who'd say that life is but a passing dream;
Let such sleep on, and never may they wake
To feel Gomorrah's apples, in their hands, ,
Crumble to dust; and never may they see
Those scenes that float upon the visioned eyes
Dissolve into an airy nothingness;
True, I have dreamed, and all was Fairyland,
Scene tript on scene of visionary joys,
As I lay sweltering 'neath the load of sweets
That pressed upon my soul: but, I awoke.
That which had been the spell of life was gone,
The shadow I had tracked, had followed long,
Was cold and cheerless as the moon's pale beams
Upon a snowy moor. I was beggared,
But wiser, happier mendicant than I
Ne'er stood at door and bread for mercy cried.
I shudder when I think upon the past,
The past? O Memory! thou traitor, thus
To ope the portals of my aching mind,
And let such thoughts obtrude! Away, far hence,
The past with all its dark vicissitudes
Wrap closely up in cold oblivion:
I linger still, and, Walter, would recount
How that, in one brief hour, my visioned wealth
Had fled far from me—all my hopes were crushed,

And I awakened from my blissful dream
To feel Life pulsing wildly on my soul,
And her hot, feverish breath upon my cheek,
And her staid, calculating eyes full-fixed
On mine, as if she'd pierce me to the core,
Which shot an all-absorbing thrill of woe
Up through my every vein. But that is gone—
Gone, save its memories—and dreams no more
Deceive me with illusive hopes of bliss.
Above, beyond these transitory scenes
I'll rise, and with a purposed soul achieve
The student's aim.

WALTER.

What, Sorrow's been with thee?
And in the secret corner of thy soul
Has perched itself, like owl on lonely tower,
And made night hideous with its saddening croak.
Thou hast confessed but darkly. I must have
The secret of thy bosom, if thou wouldst
Unseal mine eyes, and arm my beating heart
Against the soft persuasive joys I feel.
Thy words sound harshly in mine ears—they come
As the uneven, rough, disjointed notes
Of some old harp that's sadly out of tune.
The music of thy former days is hushed;
The flush has fled thy cheeks, the light thine eyes,
And an impenetrable gloom now sits
Upon that once calm brow. Come, Oran, come,
Thy bosom must not be an iron case,

Where thou'lt conceal from every eye the load,
That weighty load of woe, I fain would share.

ORAN.

Walter, I would do much to pleasure thee,
And will no longer hide my secret grief
I cannot speak, for ah! my lips would fail
To syllable the story of my woe.
But here, take this and read it, and perchance
Thou'lt learn what once I felt, what now I brave.
We parted, and thought never more would meet;
And since that dread, dark hour I've owned no power
To warp my heart-strings save these books alone—
And such I will remain. We parted, then.
I sought my low and scantily-furnished room,
A prey to thought that drove me wildly on—
Reckless and daring, to the ridge of hell.
She o'er a proud Patrician hall held sway,
Admired by idle worshippers, who sought
The palace to consume the lazy hours
With empty, aimless chat, and greet her ears
With poisoned flattery—and such is life.
But brief were all her hopes of earthly bliss;
Death, in an evil hour, came to the hall
And snatched her lord away. 'Twere vain to tell
How the lone hamlet once again she sought,
And how she visited our cottage oft,
And cheered the evening hours of mother's life
With too bright pictures of her absent son.
Disease came on the heels of age, and death

Stood at the threshold of our cot, and fain
 Would enter to embrace another prize;
 When I was summoned home ere mother's eyes
 Would fail to recognise her son, or loose
 The dying blessing of maternal love.
 Again I stood beneath the humble roof,
 And clasped unto my throbbing bosom all
 I had on earth, and that would soon be lost.
 And there was Emma too, as bright and fair
 As when we first eternal truth had pledged.
 But what was she to me?—my dream was o'er.
 The witchery of youth could ne'er return.
 And this, dear Walter, this I give to thee. [*Gives a paper.*
 Read, and with soul unbiassed, learn the truth
 Which it sends to the heart. [*Exit.*

WALTER *reading.*

Emma, we must not meet; my heart, I fear,
 Can never feel what once it felt, when thou,
 With eyes that beamed with innocence and truth,
 Wert wont to look what words could not express,
 And Oran's love was wealth enough for thee.
 Forget that Oran ever crossed thy path,
 And if forgiveness can assuage thy pain,
 Take all my heart can offer thee, and live
 Thy term of years, as God and thine own heart
 Shall smile upon. Yet, still a bitter thought
 Will often start and mar my peace of mind,
 When I recall the past, the chequered past.
 I thought that thou wert gone, for ever gone,

And but the reminiscence of the past
Alone remained of thee. But, thou'rt returned,
As summer birds returned when winter wanes;
And with thee memories of other days
Sweep through my mind and start distracting thought.
I would forget the past—thee I'd forget.
Years have elapsed since last we met, long years,
And they have passed but lightly o'er thy head—
Leaving thee still as beautiful and fair,
As when secluded from the haunts of men
I first beheld thee. Ah! that happy hour
I've oft recalled, and how we met and talked,
And sang and loved; alas! 'twas but a dream,
And vanished with the crowing of the cock.
Like travellers on life's highway we met,
Once on a day we met, and for a time
Consumed the sultry noon with pleasant chat;
The seeds of friendship soon, too soon took root,
And ripened into love's luxuriance.
Methought 'twas love, but that, too, was a dream.
Yes, I believed thee truth itself, so pure,
So guileless, and in all so innocent.
I madly loved thee more than man e'er loved,
And on Love's altar offered all the wealth
Of my young heart. I lived but on thy smile;
For it is sweet love when once our hearts
Feel the sea-surfing of a pregnant truth,
Though all unworthy we're again beloved.
As glad and playful as the sportive lambs
That gambol on the daisied lawns, was I,

Ere flashed upon my soul the winged thought
That I was prostrate at a shrine which had
No god within. Alas! my beating heart
Was pained, and faltered when the damning page
Met, with its flaming characters, my eyes,
And tolled the death-knell to each fancied hope
I had built up and centred all in thee.
Now thou'rt returned; the same rich smile illumines
Thy rosy lips, and from those gleamy eyes
Shoot forth a fire that melts each high resolve,
And fain would lead me to thy feet again.
Yes, thou art fair, thy form symmetrical,
And men, with wondering eyes, may thee proclaim
Some Peri wandering upon our earth
Far from her native fields. My dream is o'er.
And all these graces fail to charm my soul,
And woo me back to taste the bitter fruit
Thou holdst so temptingly with many a smile.
These honeyed words and beamy smiles have lost
The wizard spell that erst would lead me on,
To barter all of earth and heaven for thee.
I trusted, as the fated Tyrian Queen;—
When to her coast the sea-tossed Trojan came,
She, in the sportive innocence of love,
Pledged heart and kingdom with a queenly hand,
To one unworthy of the gift—to one
That mocked her offering, and with cruel heart
Forgot his vows of love, and rashly left
The hapless queen, when happy in her hopes,
To crush her woe upon the burning pyre.

And thou and I have met—have met to part,
As ships do part upon the boundless sea,
Each for its destined port. I would not blame—
For, Oh! 'tis hell's own fire within, to bear
Aught of cursed hate 'gainst those we once have loved;
But I'll remember thee as one sweet dream
That once came floating o'er my tranced mind—
A thing to be recounted through all time.
Farewell! God's benison I now would give
To be locked up within thy bosom, and
A pledge of how sincerely I forgive.

Ah! poor, unhappy Oran. What a life!
Naught but adversity and galling wrong
Have clung close to thee: and, when adverse Fate
Was all but conquered—when thy prospects gave
A pleasing hope on which to build for life,
Stern Disappointment steps 'tween thee and that
For which thou long hadst struggled. Cheer thee yet;
Though all be dark and troubled, there is light—
A silver lining gilds the dunnest cloud,
And strengthens feeble Hope. What? Oran, ho!

[*Oran enters.*]

Come, come, my friend, no more of groans and tears;
We've had enough of wry-faced suspiration.
You'd make me mop and whine, e'en when my heart
Is brimful with Affection's new-born joy.
Emma was false—true—well, will Helen prove
As scholarly in all the deep-dyed deeds
Of lean Deception? Ah! away the thought.
As soon might I believe that mother's love

Should wither on the dearest gift of life—
Her infant son—than that the blighted frosts
Of change should ever light upon and chill
The flowering of reciprocated love.
But come, dear Oran, smooth those wrinkles down,
Oh! welcome back the summer of the heart,
And garment not thyself in Winter's gloom:

ORAN.

Those memories come thickening round me as the mist
Upon the mountains ere the morning sun
Has lit their myriad icicles that lend
A beauty and a grandeur to the scene.
I've done with life, if love composes life.
No more the Syren's subtle drug shall course
So madly, as of yore, through this frail clay—
Giving a hue of visionary bliss
E'en to the wanderings of erratic youth:
I risked my all upon a woman's love,
And that fled from me, when all seemed so fair,
Leaving me beggared, bankrupt in despair.
And now I live to think upon the past—
To loathe the hour that brought to light of heaven,
That Emma thus could trifle with a heart
Too richly freighted with Affection's dross,
And throw it from her as a thing of time.
Dark be that fatal hour, as Egypt's gloom,
That wrought my ruin with a wanton's smile,—
That blasted all my boasted faith in truth,
In woman's constancy and woman's love.

WALTER.

Speak kindly, ever kindly:—words can pierce
The faithful heart as well as pointed steel.
A look has withered hope as frost consumes
The floweret's maiden bloom, and weary years
Have failed to expiate the load of woe,
Which that unloving look thrust on the soul.
And Oh! that lips formed for the speech of love
Should e'er let pass those deeply-poisoned words,
That horrify the night with darkened thoughts,
And from the pillow frighten balmy sleep
As if a fiend lay there. Love is a flower,
A tender flower, of slow yet tender growth:
Oh! nurse it well, nor ever thou forget
How that same flower is watered by a smile.

ORAN.

'Twere well to preach that homily to the moon,
And speak of patience and of kindly words
To him whose heart has never felt the pang
Of unrequited and rejected love.
Ah! Walter, such a life as I have led,
'Tween hope and fear, 'tween darkness and the light,
Has left my heart untimely crumpled up—
Yet, hold, my friend, there's love here—here for thee.

WALTER.

Thanks, Oran, thanks; give me but hope to live,
As we have lived in mutual confidence,
And I could laugh grim Sorrow out of face,

No matter though she dolled her favours out
With hand most lavish and consummate skill.
Thou'st scorned sincerely all my moralising,
And on thy heart hast stamped me but a fool—
Well, be it so ;—why grudge the butterfly
The brief hour of the sunny summer time,
To sport and gambol to its heart's content—
And why the bee to wanton 'mong the flowers,
And steal a rover's kiss from every rose?
And must I, Oran, meet these chilling looks,—
List the grief-burthened lisplings of thy soul,
Because, forsooth, I've rushed into thy arms,
Mad—mad with what I've gained? I, too, might tell,
Wert thou but patient, such a tale of woe,
As would these frozen eyes thaw into tears.
Wilt list, my friend?

ORAN.

Walter, proceed, and let
The tale thou'dst tell be such as will inspire
This shattered heart with thoughts of happier hours.

WALTER.

'Tis not a tale of hope or joy: 'tis one
O'er which I've shed, in secret, bitter tears,
As meditative in the noon of night,
When all is dead without, and to the mind
The past's unfolded, and in reverie
We live our youth again. Alas, alas!
Our poor Maria was the village pride,

Till Stanhope saw her, wooed her, won her heart—
And in his conquests ruined all her hopes,
Of love, of peace, and ah!—of innocence.

ORAN.

I'm all impatient, Walter, for the tale;
Why test one's patience with preambulates?
I scarcely know what viands are in store
With such a grace to whet my appetite.

WALTER.

Hast thou e'er thought upon a perjured soul,
And what a hell that leprous heart must be,
That stabs another's peace,—and, in the act,
Can smile and look unblushing up to Heaven?
And yet, such Cains, untainted, walk our earth,
Too oft the favourites of Dame Fortune's smile;
They quaff the cup of pleasure, and let loose
Their wilder passions on unwary souls,
And drag them into infamy and woe.
Such, Oran, was young Stanhope, and the thought
That man could woo a trusting maiden's heart,
But to shut out the light of heaven there,
And thrust it from him shivering in the cold
Of this uncharitable, callous world,
Has left me oft to question holy writ,
And doubt the truth of an Omniscient Heaven.
Maria! such thy wrongs, and though the earth
Be now thy cold and darkened couch of rest,
Thy memory shall live within my heart

As fresh and green as is the love of God
In martyrs' bosoms 'mid the faggots' blaze
That speeds their souls to glory. Maria!
Remember thee! Yes, I'll remember thee,
And fondly hoard thine image in my breast;
No miser shall more dearly love his gold,
Than I of cherishing thy memory.
'Tis sweet, 'tis sad to revel in the past,
To read afresh each well-thumbed page, that bears
The harrowing record of thy brief career.
I see thee still, though changeeful years have fled,
Since, with a sore heart-grief and trembling hands,
That form of ardent hopes and pious care
We reverently laid in the darksome grave.
I see thee still, and ever love to gaze
Upon that form which flushed our welling hearts
With sweets of Paradise—all, all is gone.
'Twas sweet to watch thee in thy virgin bloom,
When guileless innocence beamed in thy smile,
And the swift pulsings of thy happy soul
Suffused thy cheeks and lit thy lustrous eyes.
Thou, like the rose upon the breast of June,
O'erladen with thy summer sweets so rare,
Refreshed the sorrowing heart and sinking soul.
I see thee still, and with that beauty dowered,
Which oft our spirits cheered, as if from Heaven
Some peace-commissioned Ministrant had come,
And with a draught of soul-revivance, cooled
The parched lips, and calmed the throbbing brow.
In the lone solitude of night, when man

Forgets his sorrows in his sleep of dreams—
When life, with all its gloomy fears, is dead,
And scenes of happiness, immortal joys,
Flood in upon the happy dreamer's soul—
When all is hushed, and universal Peace
Envelopes in her ample robe, the earth—
I love to gaze upon thine imaged form,
And back recall those happy, happy hours,
When thou wouldst climb my knees, and fondly clasp
Thine arms around my neck with such a grace,
That even now, methinks, I feel them still,
And stretch my arms to take thee to my heart.
Ah! thou wert happy, when the beamy smiles
Of love's first dawning gladdened thy young soul,
When thy full heart upwelled with joyous thoughts,
And life, for thee, was Paradise restored.
But oft the clearest sky of Summer's prime
Is shrouded in the awful gloom of storms,
And the deep stillness of the Even air
Oft shivered with the rumbling thunder's roar;
As oft the happiness of some fond heart
Is crushed e'en in the fullest bloom of hope:
Then life becomes the heaviest load of woe,
And peace sought only in the lonely tomb.
'Twas thine to be maligned by cruel tongues,
To hear black Slander rob thee of a name,
And mark the finger of the saintly few
Point with significance at thee, as if
On thy pale brow the damning truth were writ:
Accursed of God and man. Ah! poor Maria,

"Twas then a change came o'er thee—such a change!
The life of life, alas! for thee was fled,
When Melancholy took thee in her arms,
And claimed the idol of our hearts, her own.
I marked the roseate flush upon thy cheek
Grow daily paler, and the starlit eye
Wax faint, and the sweet smile upon thy lip
Vanish for ever. Oh! it was a change
That fills my soul with Pity's sorest pangs,
As thus I image thee, when, in one hour,
A ruthless hand dashed from thy ruby lips
The luscious cup of earth's supremest bliss,
And sent thee, injured, to an early grave.
Alas! he may exult, but outraged Truth,
With retributive power, shall track his steps,
And 'mid the gladness of his festive hours
Shall pall his soul in Horror's fearful robe,
With awful vengeance gleaming in her eye.
And then, Maria, thou shalt be avenged.

ORAN.

Walter, speak not of vengeance, for such deeds
Are chronicled in heaven, and that day
Which sets at rest the oppressor and oppressed—
Removes the veil from loathed hypocrisy—
Reveals the secrets of man's favourite sins—
Shall mete out due reward for perjured souls,
And brand them outcasts from abodes of bliss.
Let such conceive and practise wrong, but still
The ocean they would band brooks no control,

And in derision, at a maniac's word,
Rolls proudly on, and sucks them down to hell.
But who was Maria, Walter?

WALTER.

My sister.

And such a sister, Oran, Oh my heart!
My eldest sister—she who watched my steps,
And taught me all of goodness I have known.

ORAN.

Poor Walter! thy breast has felt the arrow too.
But who'd have thought that in that lively heart
Such sorrows once had birth? 'Tis sorrow all.
The head that wears the crown has its own pang,
And anxious thought oft makes a thorny couch
To him whose breast the glittering star adorns.
Afflictions make us brothers—Sympathy
Levels distinctions, and man's brotherhood
Asserts, and with bands indissoluble,
Brings heart to heart to wage the war of life.
And so, amid our deepest sorrows, Hope
And Sympathy, twin sisters, scatter flowers
To cheer the swelling heart amid the gloom
Of this untoward and conflictive world.
Walter, the ore that's bedded in the earth,
Ere all its glorious qualities are seen,
Must pass the crucible—and, ah! shall man,
Ere he must enter on that higher state,

Not pass the martyrs' crucible, and feel
Temptation, sorrow, suffering and woe?

WALTER.

'Tis suffering strengthens weak humanity,
And feeds the spark that warms our beating heart—
To be immortal, freed from earthly thrall,
And, to be enjoyed, and to enjoy all,
Is such a boon that Heaven alone can give.
But there are those whom sufferance assails,
Short-sighted mortals, whose earth-bounded souls
Quail when Misfortune frowns, nor dare give wing
To lofty thought, and spurn the slavish hold
Time will attempt upon eternity.
Be ours, Oran, the nobler aim to live,
So that, when we may quit this scene, our names,
As household words, sacred to those we love,
Shall be embalmed in Memory's holy urn,
O'er which shall drop Affection's pious tears.

ORAN.

Walter, amen! and let Hope lead the van!
But, ah! for me no loving hearts await
To give a welcome to the joyous news—
"Another name upon the scroll of Fame."
No eyes brimful of bliss, exultant, look,
And watch what progress up the crag I make,
With anxious heart transfixed 'twixt Hope and Fear.
All—all are gone, and 'mid this desert wild
I'm but a solitary thing—with none

To whom I may yield up the laurel leaves :
But, should I fail, 'tis well—I'll see no tears
Bedim those eyes where love was wont to smile,
Nor hear Regret express her measured tones ;
But, Walter, thou hast hope, and love, and joy,
To spur thee onward in the arduous course :
Lag not, and with thy conquests fill their hearts ;
And Helen, may she lead thy wandering steps
In safety o'er the weary waste of years,
As that bright star which led the Magi on,
Till, bowing low before the Infant King,
Their journey o'er, and all their hopes fulfilled,
They offered up the treasures of their land,
And, in the fulness of their new-born joy,
Forgot the sorrows of their pilgrimage :
Even so, dear Walter, may thy star be bright
And steadfast—ever gleaming on thy path—
Until the consummation of thy hopes.
Yet, fear not, though the sun should be eclipsed,
'Twill soon pass o'er, and once again its disc
Be all the fairer, brighter, for the cloud ;
So life will have its darkness, but have heart—
Defy the devil, and with firm step keep on,
Nor swerve nor quiver though thy lot be hard.

WALTER.

They only swerve, and in dejection sink
Who build their all upon a mortal's breath ;
Trust God first, and then man, for, more than this
Has wrecked more lives than tongue can reckon up :

Were there but one great charnel-house for man,
With tombs in order, we, I fear, would read,
If epitaphs were true, that man had missed
The bridge that spans into eternity,
By cent'ring all his faith in brother worms,
That led, or fancied that they led to bliss :
But night's far spent, and yet I fain would stay :
Well, ere we part I'll cheer thee with a song.
List, Oran, and take hope.

Soon will pass these hours of sorrow,
Heaven-born Peace return again :
Let us hope that, with the morrow,
Ease will come to banish pain ;—
With the morrow
Every sorrow
Shall with us have ceased to reign.

Though our souls may feel a sadness
That will give a fear to love ;
Yet, believe me, Heaven's own gladness
Will the faithful bosom move ;
Then our sadness,
Changed to gladness,
Wing our souls to realms above.

See how beautiful is Evening,
Stars and moon most brightly shine ;
Why, then, should our hearts be grieving
While e'en midnight smiles divine ?

Hushed thy grieving,
Be believing,
Love and joy shall yet be thine.

There, Oran, sleep on that, and dreams will float
Before thee all the night, and give a taste
Of happiness, while all the world are drugged,
Unconscious of that inner life we live,
E'en in our slumbering.

ORAN.

Good, Walter, good;
I like that cheery, trustful, hopeful lay:
Our hopes must have foundation deeper far
Than earth can boast of; so our confidence
Shall strengthen as we build; and should we meet
Lank Disappointment, let us stop our ears,
Nor list her treasonous words against high Heaven.
Be firm within, and look beyond the tomb;
Work for that future which is dawning now—
The world's brotherhood!

WALTER.

So, good night, good night:
I will be with thee on the hills at dawn,
And finish our discourse.

ORAN.

The hour!

WALTER.

At dawn,

Beside the blasted oak, I'll beat the sun,
And give thee welcome ; so, once more, good night.. [*Exit.*

ORAN.

Good night? for Oran there is no good night :

[Goes to the window and looks out.]

The clouds are coursing madly through the heavens
Like snorting chargers, and obscure the moon ;
Now it is light, and then 'tis dark profound,
And dreary as the shadows of Hades.
The stars keep twinkling, and their wavering light,
'Tween the alternate darklings, seem as if
They dozed, and wakening from their drowsy sleep,
Peered out to see if all their watch was safe.
Lodged on the skirts of this great town, I hear
The giant breathing heavily, as if
The Nightmare fettered all his iron limbs,
And in his terror struggled to be free.
I'm not the only sleepless watcher here.
Ah, no ! full many a skyward attic's light
Is seen from out the darkness, and it tells
Of pinching Poverty that eats the heart,
And sucks the life-blood with the vampire's lips.
These attic stars are glimmering through the fog,
As glimmers ere it dies the hope of years,
When life's enveloped in the mirkiest robe
That ever wrapped a moonless, starless earth.

But palaces are lighted up, and glare
With gaudy splendour far into the night ;
There revel Pleasure's wantons, and their hearts,
Surcharged with life's luxuriance, forget
Their weaker brethren shivering in the cold,
With eyes tear dabbled, fed from craving hearts,
Whose wants are rebels, and will not be quelled.
And in the city's darkest corners, lurk
Forms once symmetrical, once beautiful,
But blighted now as is the stately oak
When lightning strips it of its hoary crown,
And leaves a shrivelled, miserable thing,
Like kings unrobed, uncrowned, and fugitives.
Poor wanderers of the night, unhoused and sad,
Yet with your sadness levity is twined,
And scornful jeers at Virtue's lowly ones.
Ye pass from street to street, like evil thoughts
That people evil minds, and Night's dull ears
Ye pierce with hollow laughter, whose harsh sounds
Start the belated traveller, as if
The gates of darkness were thrown open, and
The fallen, rioting in holiday,
Held their high festival on frightened earth.
Oaths dance upon those lips which once could breathe
The hallowed name of Father in their prayers,
And all unconscious of one erring thought,
Look up to God with calm simplicity.
Ah, wretched ! from what height are fallen—
How changed the glory of your virtuous youths—
How dark the prospect of your coming doom,

When death, unwelcome, hurries you away
Amid your reckless scoffing, daring Heaven
To blast your impious ravings with His power!
Yet, what am I more than these hapless ones;
That in my heart I should abhor them—wrong them,
As if I were more holy far than they
Before Omniscient Heaven? Alas! poor fool,
Wrapped in Hypocrisy's dark cloak, we stride
Before our brother man full pompously,
And blush not though we know that Heaven descries
The hollow, rotten, leprous heart within,—
That brands us villains, and our lives a lie!
How various is the game of life, even here,
In this great city with its million souls,—
Each straining, pressing onward for a prize!
How cautious every move, lest one more skilled,
Or more adventurous in the hazardous game,
Checkmate us, and upon our ruin rise!
Oh God!—Oh God! are we thy children?—we
Whose hearts cling to this earth as ivy clings
Around the sturdy oak—and will not seek
Companionship with Thee who art our good,
Our first, our last—our gracious All in All?
Oh! make me Thine in spirit, soul, and aim,
And in Thy love be happy as the fawn
That bounds athwart the lea in summer-time:—
I would be great, yet only great in Thee;
For man has wandered from the door of Heaven,
When he, in search of greatness, looks to Earth,
That she may satisfy his craving soul.

Greatness that's sprung of earth, but proves itself
The subtle Mirage on the shore of Time,
Which leads us onward in the vain belief
Of home at hand, while seas yet 'tween us roll :
What are thy conquests, Greatness?—where thy sons,
Whose names made nations tremble, and whose tread,
More dreadful than the grasping earthquake's swoop,
Has levelled kingdoms—empires with the dust?
They're silent, powerless in the bonds of Death,
And but their memories on historic page
Remaining, and we read the solemn truth—
How perishable is the wreath of Fame :
The Roman, Macedonian, Corsican !
Their sun is set—is set in endless night—
As hopeless as the rebel spirits, cast
From bliss to the profoundest depths of woe !
Thus, there is ever an unceasing war
'Tween Good and Evil—spirit and the flesh,
For soul-supremacy : too oft the Good
Is fettered, and the Evil victorious.
These vagaries of the mind perplex the more
The more indulged in—I must give them up ;
And now for study, and with study, thought :
How can I work that theme out we've prescribed,
“ Our immortality ? ” I'm in the dark,
And cannot budge a step : serious thinking
Wakes up conjectures that bewilder, and,
Without a compass, I'm adrift at sea.
I cannot look into futurity
Without a pang that springs up from the past.

Ah! those heart-histories which few can read,
Or reading, understand,—save those who suffer,
And whose ink is their blood; yet, I'll go forth,
And haply human weakness will be strengthened,
And human vision penetrate the mist
That veils the glories of the distant spheres;
And human knowledge, guided on by Heaven,
Will demonstrate man's immortality:
I cast my eyes across the chart of life,
And mark one rock, superior to the rest,
On which I foundered, ere the flush of youth
Had paled upon my cheek. What sorrows spring,
Even from one bitter memory, to mar
The soul's serenity, and whelm in gloom
The deeper, as we'd struggle into light!
Emma, thou wert the rock on which I split,
And when thou fled, all hope, all peace, all faith
Fled from me—leaving but a shattered mind,
And withered heart, that proudly donned the garb
Of sceptic, laughing at the ways of Heaven;
And 'mong my fellows selfish, and how cold!
There—there, that is enough!—when will my heart
Regain its wonted warmth—its peace and hope,
And trust the future, ah! so faithfully
As in the rosy morn of Emma's love?
Oh God! I yet would claim Thee Father, yet
Would sit low at Thy feet, and hear Thy words
Of love and mercy to Thy wandering child.
I will be strong, and climb the peak of Faith—
Whose summit reaches heaven, and on its top

Catch glimpses of the beautiful and grand,
Sphered in their orbs of glory: onward yet,—
Perchance God's smile will radiate my heart,
Ere in the heavens the rounded sun is seen.
Ah! would 'twere so, then would my heart leap forth,
In all its fulness, as the captive, when
Freed from his cell he walks the earth again.
Come now, ye constant and ye faithful friends—
Ye wondrous vestiges of mighty minds,
Again I seek your counsel and your aid
To calm the fever of this heart-disease.
Give place—give place, ye busy worldly thoughts,
That darken all the chambers of the mind,
And chain us down to earth: that stifle faith,
Which longs to realise—Eternity.

[*Gradually sinks into a reverie, repeating—*
If I'm immortal, there must be a God!
A God?—why can I doubt it?

SCENE SECOND.

SUNRISE ON THE HILLS.

ORAN.

I've read the stars out, and with aching head,
And heaving bosom, welcome Morn's return.
Hail, balmy Morn! with thee come quiet thoughts
And cheering memories, and pleasant scenes;
Thou hast no part with wan, low-thoughted Care,

That lov'st to sit beneath the shade of night,
And count the lazy hours as they drag on,
With bitter tears and sighs. The Morn I love,
And on the breezy hills to watch the East
Throw back her gates and let the sun emerge
In dazzling glory, like a conquering king
With prostrate nations at his chariot-wheels.
He comes, great sovrain of the blythesome day,
And Night recedes at his august approach,
As yields a regent to the rightful heir
The vacant throne of kings. Hark! hymns of praise
Swell rapturous from the woodland choristers,
And all Creation's voice harmonious joins
In loud acclaim to welcome Morn's return.
How my soul flutters as I climb these crags
With buoyant step, and bathe my throbbing brow
In the cool breeze of heaven, that fills with joy,
And quickens the weak pulsings of the heart!
Cribbed in that cheerless room through the long night,
My soul grew faint and vainly strove to reach
The purposed end of an ambitious aim.
But can it be ambition thus to search,
And with an earnest, anxious heart, explore
That dim futurity which stretches far
Into the regions of the great unknown,
For peace long lost? I've lost that jewel, Peace.
Will it not come again as morning's dawn,
With smiles and songs to fill with mirth the heart?
Or, am I doomed thus onward still to go,
To trace a shadow that eludes my grasp,

And never reach the haven of my hopes?
Why have such thoughts pursued me to the hills,
And come, as an unwelcome guest, to mar
What little happiness I here might gain?
I hear the song of birds, the hum of bees,
The murmuring rills, and feel upon my cheek
The kiss of Morn; yet is my being torn
By wild conjectures and soul-damning thoughts,
That turn my bosom's calm into a hell.
Oh! that these whirling doubts would now assume
The form of certainty, or doubt be quashed,
Nor lash my mind as with a scorpion whip,
That maddens while it wounds. Doomed as I am
To grapple with an iron destiny,
My soul is all untuned. The faintest sounds
Fall now as discord on my pensive ear,
Jarring too harshly on the fretful heart.
I look around, and all is full of joy,
And I'm alone the only moody thing
That breathes the summer air. The wretch that feels
The cursed assassin's dagger at his throat,
And sees his home, his children, and his wife,
Appear before his anguished gaze—is not
More destitute of peace and angel-hope
As even now am I. How am I thrown,
As shipwrecked mariner in polar seas,
On raft, despairing that each hungry wave
Rolls on to swallow, while around him stare
Fierce gleaming eyeballs, and wide gaping jaws
Are ready to devour, and howlings wild

Strike terror to his soul—even so they come,
Those monsters of the brain, like hounds of hell!
How wild tumultuary thoughts upheave
My bosom's calm tranquillity, and give
A foretaste of excruciating pain—
That bitter morsel, of which priests delight,
With rabid eloquence, to blanch the cheeks
Of simple rustics, whose too credulous hearts
Receive, nor question aught of bigot-zeal!
And such is gospel-preaching—such is love?
No! sooner tell me God can pleasure take
In the abandoned, hellward fratricide,
Than hurl anathemas on those who choose
To wander from the priestly-beaten track
In search of Truth, and such to be esteemed
The outcasts of that God, whose name is Love.
God's voice is love—His works are merciful,
And demonstrate to erring, guilty man,
There yet is room in God's unfathomed heart—
E'en for a Cain—repentant of his crime,
That hurled a brother, reeking with his blood,
Into the presence of offended Heaven.
How sick at heart I turn from those who'd teach
That they alone can point the way to bliss!
Where can I turn and find not God, whose power
Moves every wheel of this sublime machine?
What spot on this terrestrial ball but teems
With ministers, whose still small voice can pierce
The stoniest heart that owns the pulse of life?
What eye so blind, but reads in every leaf,

In the vast garden of Creation, that
There is a God, and He delights in love?
The lark that soars on dewy wing at morn,
To usher in the sun's resplendent reign,
Swells a rich melody amid the clouds—
While the sweet notes re-echo joyously
That every quiver is a theme of love;—
The opening Day, so flushed with glorious light,
Comes with a smile of hope—of life and love,
And bids the weary-worn have courage, and
Trust that to-morrow's sun may bring release;
And what of Heaven's beneficence I feel,
As now so softly bathe this troubled brow,
The zephyrs, as they wanton rapturously
Among the flowers—the woodlands' leafy boughs,
And bid each animated thing rejoice.
The sun goes forth in beauty and in power,
And every ray that gilds the mountain tops
Bespeaks the Giver, in whose bosom swells
That principle divine—unequalled love.
What music rings in the delirious dash
Of the wild mountain-torrent, as it leaps
From cliff to cliff adown the deep abyss,
Then hurries madly through the impervious glen
Till hushed to rest within the lake's embrace;
And the tornado has a mighty voice
To sing of Him whose presence fills the earth—
Whose works proclaim how boundless is His love,
And how paternal are His ways to man.
Oh! let my thirsty soul for ever feel

That influence which springs from heavenly love,
And gives unto man's labour-burthened heart,
A benison surpassing pomp and power.
Who built yon mighty firmament?—who gave
The sun, the moon, the stars, their place and name?
List, and from 'mid the galaxy of suns
There comes the pæan of a mighty song,
As star on star and orb on orb proclaim
'Twas God, whose love sustains and governs all.
Then farewell, boasted wisdom of the wise,
I'd flee far from your sophistry, and cling
To that firm rock of hope, of love, and faith,
Where there is peace and safety for the soul,
When the earth smoulders and is crumpled up
In the vast conflagration that will come,
And purify the earth which sin has dimmed,
And "Freeman" write on man's sin-marred brow.
In God alone is safety—in His works
Is that which can the soul so satiate,
That earth becomes transformed, and once again
Man's blessed with Eden and the purest joys.
Then let me shun man's speculative path,
And wander 'mong the wondrous works of God—
These be my study and my highest aim,
To read and learn the character of Him
Who, on Creation's volume, has imprest
His name for man to venerate and love.
But hark! the buzz of labour fills the ear,
And o'er the fields the lowly swains are seen
Full gaily at the team. O happy hearts,

Blest with contentment and an easy lot—
The years glide past as if a summer's noon,
And leave you happy as your happy flocks !
How many whose flushed hearts do beat beneath
The silken robe and star of honoured state,
In yon proud city, envy this retreat,
With all the simple pleasures that are yours !
Once I enjoyed such peaceful pleasures, but
The city's dread contaminating blast
Swept o'er the summer of my ardent heart,
And withered every floweret blooming there.
But these vain thoughts my spirit have weighed down,
And drowsy stupor nestles in my eyes ;
I'll rest awhile beneath the aged oak,
And folded in the arms of blissful sleep,
Be all oblivious to the outer world.

[*While he sleeps the following Spirits appear.*]

SPIRIT OF THE PAST.

I come from clouds of brightness,
Whose splendour dims the sun ;
My wings of rainbow lightness,
A lengthened race have won ;—
For from afar,
Beyond each star,
To thee I've swiftly run.

Of the Past I am the Spirit,
And guard its portals wide,

And if thou dost inherit
A daring spirit's pride,
Arise and come
To my cloudy home,
Where the streams of Pleasure glide.

'Tis there thou'lt roam once more
Through scenes of infancy,
And all thou wouldst explore
Again thou'lt clearly see;
Then come away
To brighter day,
And trust thy steps to me!

SPIRIT OF THE PRESENT.

I come, and fain would win,
For all the toil begun,
A smile from thee;
My sister of the Past
O'er thy young soul hath cast
Her wizard, weirdful blast;
But her spells can never last—
So come with me.

I'll lead thy footsteps where
All is so wondrous fair—
A Paradise;

There's nought of grief or pain,
While I, the Present, reign;
And Oh! if thou wouldst gain
The secrets of my fane,
Awake, arise.

The Present is my name,
Known to the sons of Fame,
Whose life is toil
But wake, and fame is thine:
The laurel leaf I'll twine
To wreathe those brows divine,
And I shall claim thee mine
With a smile.

SPIRIT OF THE FUTURE.

The Past is gone—its days are ended—
Nought in them but sorrow;
And the Present's always blended
With a coming morrow;
The palm is mine—who can deny
I lead to a brighter, sunnier sky?
I live while all of earth must die—
The Future ne'er can borrow.

Oh! then 'tis mine to lead thee on,
To conquest and to glory;

And I shall yet claim thee mine own,
With those thou'st sung in story ;
Then rise, my son, the distant hill
Is all before thee, and I will,
To climb it, give thee strength and skill,
Nor let thy hopes be hoary.

Oh! think of the mighty spirits, dead,
Whom the Past yields to my keeping;
They're gone, but a halo is over them shed
In my arms as they calmly lie sleeping;
Oh! toil for the Future and trust it too,
And day by day thy vows renew—
Thou'lt gain the goal if thou'lt pursue
And nerve thy soul 'gainst weeping.

[ORAN, *wakening and starting up.*]

What strange, mysterious dream is this I've had?
The Past, the Present, and the Future came
To woo me to their arms. What can it mean?
The Past—we shake hands here, and so must part.
Thou wert no friend of mine: a cruel nurse,
Who, from his earliest years, had little care
Of him whose weary life has been a blank;—
The Present, too, has been both cold and keen,
Too chary of her gifts to one who wooed
Her faintest smile, and from her table took
The portion of the lowest hireling hind;—
The Future?—come, be thou my only good;
I'll trust thy keen black eye and gentle hand;

Thy voice is musical as is the song
Of seraphim in Heaven's holy choir.
Lead on, I'm thine—thine evermore; but list—
Who comes?—some merry-hearted youth, I ween,
Who pipes his merry song as blythely clear
As early lark on fluttering wing!—list, list.

Some love the dusky evening hour,
And 'mid the shady grove,
To sit and list the night-bird pour
The story of her love;
But, not for me the evening dim,
Though stars enrich the sky;
Give me the black-bird's morning hymn,
And zephyr's gentle sigh:
I'll hie away to the mountains grey,
Ere the sunshine gilds the lea,
And by the streams have happy dreams,
Oh! the merry, merry Morn for me!

When in the West I mark the sun
Go down behind the hills,
My spirit sinks when Day is done,
And Night her round fulfils;
With Morn all Nature smiles again
As light illumines the earth;
To sorrow, suffering and pain
The Eve had given birth.
I'll hie away to the mountains grey,
Ere the sunshine gilds the lea,

And by the streams have happy dreams,
Oh! the merry, merry Morn for me!

A gloom hangs on my troubled brow,
Unrest consumes my heart,
But with the Morn I am as now,
When I and Sorrow part;
For on mine ear I hear the lark
Sing gladly Morning's song,
And even from the meadows, hark—
Swells melody along.

I'll hie away to the mountains grey,
Ere the sunshine gilds the lea,
And by the streams have happy dreams,
Oh! the merry, merry Morn for me!

[WALTER *approaching.*]

Good morning, friend Oran, dost like my song?

ORAN.

It goes right merrily I trow; but if
Thou wert enamoured of the Morning's smile,
As thou hast sung, why not, a-tiptoe, hail
The first faint streaks outbursting in the East—
The herald's horn proclaiming the advent
Of Day's great fiery King? His levee's o'er,
And thou hast missed the richest treat that Morn
Can offer to her faithful worshippers.

WALTER.

Well, Oran, thou'rt at fault; I also saw
The rising god—would'st, like me, limn the scene?
With virgin modesty the early Dawn
Peered through her lattice in the half-oped East;
Nature still slept in Night's deep solitude,
And Silence brooded o'er the lawn and wood;
The bloom of youth was on her rosy cheeks;
Her eyes of azure blue, so lovingly,
Thrilled through my soul as all-absorbed I lay,
And panted to embrace such loveliness;
Her locks, so like a golden shower of rain,
Hang o'er her shoulders as a silken veil,
While 'mong her tresses zephyrs wantoned free,
And, all unchecked, enjoyed what was to me
The greatest boon my greedy lips could crave.
Upon a lofty eminence she stood
Majestic, and surveyed the varied scene.
Not fearing the rude gaze of man, around
Her shoulders, with a virtuous care, she flung
Her cloak, enamelled with the new-born light,
Then skipt the mountain-tops, with sylph-like foot,
Upon her mission to a slumbering world.
Obedient to her mandate, I beheld,
With flashing fiery crown, the regal Sun
Rise from his purple couch, engirt with light
Sublime, which, downward slanting to the earth,
Enkindled the bright dew-drops of the Morn,
And waked the chorus of the vocal grove:
Nature was glad—a joyous halo danced

Around her brow, and charmed the wondering soul
With glories that bespoke the bliss of heaven :
High in the lift the lark had ta'en its flight—
Forsook its home upon the dewy sward,
Attuned its throat for gush of melody,
And sung its early hymn to listening sprites
That ceased awhile from heaven's own minstrelsy
To list the music of the wandering bard.
The black-bird's lay came stealing on the ear,
Clear and melodious, like some sweet song
Voiced on the glassy lake at even-tide ;
The wild bee, humming forth its drowsy tune,
Sped to the woods to cull its luscious store,
Then homeward laboured, loaded with its prize ;
The gaudy butterfly, supremely proud
Of its gay coat of variegated hues,
Exultant, revelled 'mong the opening flowers ;
The swains, responsive to the call of Morn,
Were now a-field—no care have they, content
Beams in each youthful eye, the merry song
Goes round with jocund glee, and thus they while
The happy hours of Summer's Morn away.
Thus all was animative wheresoe'er
I turned my wondering eyes ; but, why will man,
Recumbent on his creaking couch, deny
Himself a feast of such felicity ?
Or, close his eyes on beauty, which the Morn
Unfolds for pious praise and wonderment ?
The stream that dashes down the dark ravine,
The melodies that issue from the bowers,

The lawns arrayed with Flora's richest gems,
The sportive lambkins and the lowing kine,
The shepherd's pipe and plough-boy's guileless lay,
All—all conspire to lead him forth—in vain :
Such was the scene, and such the thoughts that poised
My mounting soul upon the wings of song.

ORAN.

And thou hast drawn a goodly picture, Walter;
But scenes like these, as other scenes of earth,
Are doomed to vanish, and with Time at last
Be lost in bosom of Eternity.
Hast thought how all things tend to death, and what
Shall be our destiny beyond the bourne
'Bout which we grope in error and in doubt?
Would I could pillow this unquiet head
Upon the bosom of a stable hope,
That, as a torch to light the darksome path,
Might pioneer and lead my heart to rest!
Walter, I've done with life! my only aim
Is now to learn the future of my being:
Man lives his years of sorrow, and at length
Is gathered to the worms, and there he sleeps.
But has that sleep of death no wakening?
Shall no bright morning dawn upon the tomb,
And liberate our bodies from the grasp
Of this unconquerable, all-powerful king,
The tyrant of our being, ghastly Death?

WALTER.

Uncharitable thought! Has God thus formed
His noblest creature, and has gifted powers
With which to range through space and grasp the poles—
To traverse earth and air—to subjugate
The elements, and pierce with daring ken
That dim futurity, had He not willed
We'd wear the robe of immortality.
The eagle, say they, lives its hundred years.
Well, what of that? is man so circumscribed
That fourscore years must sum his little span,
Then leave him barren of a better hope,
The blessed oasis of the weary soul,
That glorious yet to be? Ah! Oran, no.

ORAN.

I've wrought the matter till my aching brain
Refuses farther work. Walter, the step,
The uncertain step that leads to the unknown,
Makes cowards of the bravest hearts that e'er
Warmed into life the clayey frame of man.
'Tis not the leaving of this joyous earth—
Its loves, its friendships, and its griefs—that pains,
But to build up your all upon a hope
That Heaven will yet be kind; I must have more.

WALTER.

Have then thy wish, Oran, read and believe
That He who gives the promise will fulfil,
Ay, to the letter, all His gracious truth

To the afflicted, though believing ones.
Live as thou list, at last when Death appears
Thou'lt find the armour of the Christian proof
Against his wiles, and with a heavenly smile
Thou'lt enter the dark valley with a shout—
A victor's shout—ay, even in your fall!
And such is he who trusts behind the cloud,
His God, his hope, and in the loathsome grave
Sleeps calmly till earth's jubilee has dawned.

ORAN.

But still that tremor of uncertainty,
That, with the cold and slimy hand of Doubt,
Above the abyss that's yawning to entomb,
In triumph holds me, as if but a child,
And sported with my tears. I'm but a slave,
A fettered slave, who, with distended eyes,
Awaits the future with a sickly hope
That Heaven's emancipation may descend
And strike the shackles from my quivering limbs.
Ah! Walter, these passionate inquiries rend
My bosom, and my brain is all a fire,
A hopeless burning, as the doomed ship
Upon the ocean, when no friendly sail
Meets the despairing looks of speechless woe.
I feel a sad presentiment within,
That this weak tenement of mortal life
Will soon be stretched upon its narrow bed,
And with Earth's heroes and her cowards, sleep
Through the long ages of oblivion.

But can that restless tenant of our frames,
The soul, become a piece of worthless clay,
On which the worms hold royal festival,
And batten their lean sides? If it still lives,
Where are its wanderings through the long years,
Ere bone seeks bone, and sinews clothe the same,
When eternised is frail humanity?
But all these speculations lead astray,
And the inquiring soul but deeper plunge
Into the vortex of the heart's own hell,
Where proudly stalks presumptuous Unbelief.

WALTER.

The future is that sealed book, which none,
No, not the loftiest of lofty minds,
Can open and disclose its mysteries.
Ere thou, Oran, can calm those stormy thoughts,
And woo unto thy bosom peace, begin
To trace thy steps back to thy infant years,
And once again a little child look up
Into thy mother's face, with questioning eye
And confidence a child can only feel.
Canst thou, Oran, a mother's words forget?
Or, in thy riper years, be tempted to spurn
The solace that in death gave her this joy—
When Death was conquered, all again would meet,
And severed hearts in love be knit once more?
If thus the teaching of thy early years
Be sacred to thy manhood, trust it still;
Nor wither up with foul aborted Doubt

The fairest flower of youth—a mother's love.
Are we no better than the Athenian sage,
Who, when unfortified by heavenly light,
Could calmly quaff the poisonous cup, and smile,
As flashed upon his soul the vivid truth—
Death must precede our immortality?
They're cowards that can look on Death, and fear
To tread the chambers of the mighty dead,
And view the trophies of revolving years :
Who would not live again when Time becomes
Decript, and in dotage idly talks—
When Earth, transformed and braided with God's love,
Shall stand as happy bride on nuptial Morn,
All smiles to wed the chosen of her heart,
And, with love's dalliance, enthrall his soul?—
Whence all the ardent longing that will rise,
Unbidden, in our hearts, if, in the grave—
That gloomy charnel-house—we be forgot,
And sink into the shade of that long Night
Which no bright smile of Morn shall ever cheer?
Not one but shivers with an inward dread
At the bare thought, that, after death, the soul
Becomes annihilated, and our frames
Ne'er walk God's earth again with bounding foot,
And hearts o'ercharged with love ineffable.
The dull and lonely winter comes and seres
The fairest flower in Flora's beauteous wreath,
And the hoarse howlings of the surly wind
Sweep through the boughs, and hush the warblers' songs ;
The stately oak, grey with unnumbered years,

Bends to the fury of the wintry King,
And all the saplings, in their native woods,
Groan in their agony, and writhe with pain.
The scene, so picturesque, is clouded o'er,
And Desolation dims the sparkling eye
Of Nature, that erst beamed so beautiful ;
Yet hope we that the smiling Spring will come,
And, with victorious love, the widowed Earth
Lead forth to dance upon the daisied meads,
And to the happy notes of amorous birds
Renew their troth beneath the budding shade—
So full in hope, that Summer, too, will come
With fruits, and flowers, and songs—rich gifts of Love ;
And Autumn, with his mellow sheaves, will come
Unto the nuptials of the happy Earth.
Thus run the seasons, and thus glide the years,
Alternate sunshine and alternate shade.
So, when the winter of our life has come—
When we must calmly sleep and take our rest,
Plant all thy hopes in Heaven's assured good—
The Eternal Spring will dawn upon our graves,
And call us forth to tread those flowery walks
That never felt keen winter's blighting breath.
Ah ! Oran, could our hopes not soar beyond
The darkest clouds that chequer human life,
Who would not bare the bosom for the steel,
And bless the hand that sent their suffering soul
To the unknown—and, Oh ! because unknown,
Must bear the sneer of impious Mistrust ?
There is a world of spirits, beyond our ken,

Who even now lean on their golden harps,
And mark the course each candidate for fame
Pursues, and, with suspended breath, await
The victor at the goal,—then strike the chords
In welcome to another soul to glory.
Perchance thy mother, Oran, with an eye
All tenderest pity, views thee from afar,
And with expectant arms, is bending low
To bear thy soul before the Eternal's throne—
That jewel to adorn a mother's crown,
A son brought home to heaven. Think thou of this,
And if thy heart can thrust from thee these truths,
Thou art indeed undone.

ORAN.

The fields, the trees
Stagger and reel as drunkards in their bauch :
There—'twas a passing thought. My mother, Walter !
Yes, I'll be firm to all the precious truths
With careful hand she sowed in early youth,
And trust that future of immortal bloom,
Though crushed amid the ruins of the world,
When Time's convulsed in his last agonies,
And ushers in, O joy ! Eternity !
Then who may tell what meetings shall be there—
The young, the old, the parent, and the child—
The haughty lordling and the menial serf—
The proud oppressor and the long oppressed ?
And what emotions will each bosom heave
As they behold the first faint streak of Day,

That owns no Evening, dawn upon our Earth,
With the archangel's trumpet sounding high?
Then may my mother, bending from the skies,
With smile angelic, welcome me to bliss,—
And in a transport of seraphic joy,
Lead me to the fruition of that hope
Which laughs at Death in his most hideous form,
And to the soul, on faith's ascending wing,
Throws back the golden gates of Paradise.
Though darkness shroud me in the awful hour,
I'll plunge into the gloom with daring soul,
And wake as from a happy, happy dream,
In the embrace of strong maternal love,
And in the blest reality of heaven.
When Passion rends the bosom, Reason reels,
And man—a blind and helpless creature—gropes
In darkness denser than the earth-bound grave.
So wars the spirit of the Earth 'gainst Heaven,
And seeks to lead man's erring steps to tread
The sensuous paths that wile to Ruin's brink,
Then hurls him headlong into the abyss
Of helpless, irretrievable Despair.
Could we, as from a peak secure, look down
Into that awful sink of bloated Guilt,
Where riot, in their dismal wretchedness,
Those that erst trode God's earth with boastful foot,
And laughed to scorn the future of their fate,
Afraid wee'd shrink, as if an adder stung,
And, in our wonderment, all anxious ask,
Why Heaven o'erturns not on their impious heads

The battlements of hell, and close those lips
On which such blasphemies are wont to play?
And yet such Boasters walk our earth, and laugh
At fools who think that Death, at last, gives birth
To endless joy, or to unending woe!
E'en now grim Death slays thousands in our midst;
And while we know not who the next may be
That gluts his maw, the blanched cheeks bespeak
The terror that has seized the coward heart—
That, in its frenzy, grasps the feeblest hope
Which ever propped a sinking soul in death,
And dies, God wot, in abject misery.

WALTER.

As leaps the roe from mountain ridge to ridge,
When in the East it spies the opening Day
That gives to Earth a cheering smile of life,
So leaps my heart to hear thee utter truths—
Those truths that make the aged heart feel young,
And whose rich vintage never in the sere
Shall dawn upon us in the after-state,
Which, as the sword of Damocles, is hung
E'en by a hair o'er every human head:
To doubt our immortality, alas!
Were evidence enough to damn our souls,
And evermore exclude us from the light
Of Heaven's effulgent, but unsetting sun.
The future of our being merges in
God's love, fruited in Eternity;
And when in Death our bodies rest, the soul,

Freed from its earthly tenement, ascends,
And waits the coming of that awful morn
When Death must free his captives, and himself
Be conquered by a Mightier than he:
Look down the vista of revolving years
Till Time's last gasping is the solemn knell
For the inauguration of the King,—
At whose dread fiat ages shall stand up :—
Those whom the Sea has caverned in his womb—
Those who have tracked the desert, and whose sands
Have, urged on by the dread Simoom, devoured,—
Those who have glorious or inglorious fell
Upon the battle-field, where bleach their bones,—
And those who've worn out life on sickly hopes,
And earned the student's life—the pauper's grave,—
These scattered over Earth, their graves unknown—
Known only to the all-Omniscient Eye ;
Yea, peoples of all climates, creeds and tongues,
Shall start to being at His Omnific word,
To hear His wisdom in their final doom :
The heart that rears the structure of its hopes
Upon the shelfy sands of Time, will feel
As Samson felt, when, wakening from his dreams,
That false Delilah, with her trait'rous hands,
Had shorn him of his strength, and cast him forth
A helpless, easy prey for cruel hands ;
But he who feels the quickening love of Heaven,
Though dangers hedge him in, is ne'er a coward,
Nor quails when Death assails him—well he knows
'Tis but his Father's voice that calls him home.

ORAN.

I know not, Walter, but I feel as if
I had a summons from the other world,
And that, as in the fable, Charon stood
And beckoned to embark upon the flood :
Though young, my life is in the sere, and Death
Shall meet me suddenly, and carry hence ;
But not off guard, as is the sentinel
On lonely midnight watch, when drowsy sleep
Seals up his eyes, and makes an easy prey
For enemy in treacherous ambuscade ;
Such thoughts will come, and, as they come, wake up
A fear—a dread that all those budding hopes
Have bloomed in beauty, but to feel a blight,
And wither in the winter of the tomb.
Again, the thought that Faith is but a flower
That has its bud on earth—its bloom in heaven—
Bursts in upon my soul's profoundest dark,
As shines the solitary star of Eve,
And cheers when darkness veils the brow of Night—
As sinks the sun amid the purple clouds
That blaze up in the West when Day retires,
To revel in the joys of other climes :
So sinks my soul in the embrace of Doubt,
O'erwhelmed in darkness and in mad despair.

WALTER.

'Twas Doubt that peopled Pandemonium,
And hurled into its depths those spirits once
So happy in the minstrelsy of Heaven ;

But now their golden harps unstrung, they raise
The raven's croak, and make the vaults of hell
Re-echo with their baffled rage, as if
A tameless pack of lions caged, that growl,
And glared all furious through the iron bars.
Should Doubt lurk in thy bosom, pluck it out;
For, like a poisonous weed, 'twill spread and mar
Thy loftiest hope and holiest desire—
Reunion in our after state in heaven.
Cast from thee Doubt—that outcast from the skies—
And woo Belief, to twine around thy soul
As ivy round the oak, and lead thee on,
As faithful pioneer, to future bliss.
Doubt, with presumptuous hands, seeks to build up,
As daring hands of old attempt to build
Pellion on Ossa, and so climb the skies,
But vain to scale the battlements of heaven,
And hurl Omnipotence from off His throne.
Belief looks up to Heaven with trustful eye,
And waits the future with a glowing heart—
Securely anchored on the love of God.

ORAN.

As vessel tossed upon the stormy sea,
When rudder gone and canvas riven, finds
A friendly harbour in some favoured bay
Till Ocean's fury's spent; so would I seek
A sheltering in the stormless bay of heaven,
And, 'mid life's fiercest brawls, look up and smile,
Because His arm sustained me, and His eye

Beamed with affection that can silence Fear :
I would be near Him, with Him, hear His words,
And with my head upon His bounding heart,
Feel all the ecstasy of untold love.

WALTER.

Thou'rt now thyself once more ; then, Oran, plant
Thy standard on the pinnacle of Love,
And bid defiance to each traitorous thought
That would persuade to break thy loyal trust
In Heaven's beneficence. Have confidence
In Him who metes thee out thy earthly span,
And whose devoted shrines Earth, Air, and Sea,
On which He has indellibly impressed
His wisdom, mercy, beauty, and His power:

ORAN.

That fills my heart, but thought can't move my tongue ;
I look upon the woods, the hills, the wolds,
Crowned with the glory of the Morning Sun,
And Nature smiles with joy, but with the Night
Darkness and Sorrow come, when starts the thought,—
Will Morn e'er wake us from the Night of Death ?
Yes, Walter, Morn will dawn upon the grave,
And show what a poor fool presumptuous man
Has been in questioning the truth of Heaven.
I'm weary of a life that's been but dark,
And fain would rest upon my narrow bed
Till notes angelic call us into life ;
The fifth act of life's drama hurries on,

And ere the curtain drops, with swelling breast,
This darkened scene stands full before my view :—

In his chamber, sad and lonely,
Sits a youth with aspect pale ;
Sorrows were his portion only
In this weary Baca's vale.

Once his eye with hope was lighted,
And his daring heart was brave ;
Now his fondest hopes were blighted,
All he wished—an early grave.

He had struggled in life's battle
With a hero's soul of fire ;
He had braved the deafening rattle
E'en of Disappointment's ire.

'Bove the trammels that would chain him,
He had soared on eagle wing ;
But dense cloudlets still beset him
That could nought of comfort bring.

Dark before him looms the future
As the sable wing of Night ;
Not one cheering, soothing feature
Of the present gave delight.

Nought of gladness eased his sorrow—
Prone upon his soul it lay ;
Vainly dreamed he of to-morrow
That might present griefs allay.

On his couch there lies he dreaming
What he *is*, and might have been ;
Visions through his brain are streaming,
And recall what he has seen.

Only is he stirred and shaken
With what now his soul appals,
Like to one whom perils waken
When for aid he vainly calls.

"Must I," says he, "struggle ever
With the waves to gain the shore?
No; let Death now come and sever
Me from life, and all is o'er.

"Over all the pain and grieving
That have chequered life's brief day—
Over all the cold deceiving
When false friends can trust betray:

"Over all the poisoned sorrow
That in life has been my lot—
Over gilded hopes of morrow—
In the grave all is forgot.

"Soon, Oh! soon all will be over,
When my soul shall burst away;
Now, methinks, I seem to hover
At the gates of endless day."

Well, Walter, dost like my lay?

WALTER.

Ah! 'tis sad,
To think that scene should e'er be realised,
And leave me widowed in this world of sin:
When Oran has departed, sad to think
Our friendship, blossoming so full of love,
Should wither ere it fruits.

ORAN.

Come, Walter, come.
Must Oran now be comforter, and lead
Thy wandering thoughts as thou hast guided mine?
What are our loves, our friendships in this life?
A passing dream, which, when the morning dawns,
Leaves us in wretchedness to clutch the forms
Our busy minds had clothed in loveliness,
With all the unsubstantial glare of Earth.
Look upward and beyond this earthly ball,
When rising with the ages I shall hail,
And welcome thee to Love's eternity!

WALTER.

Speak not of Death, that ghastly foe to Love.
'Tis hard to counsel the warm beating heart
To offer up the treasure of its love,
Into the greedy maw of ravenous Death.
I will have courage in the conflict hour,
And with faith's eye will penetrate the gloom
That hangs upon the grave, and wait the hour
That reunites us there as even now.

ORAN.

When pent up thunder clouds o'er cast the heavens,
A shadow falls on Earth, or throws a hue,
A melancholy hue on Nature's brow ;
But when the sun peers from behind the clouds,
With increased splendour, all is joy again,
And e'en the momentary clouds forgot
In the rich gush of glory on the hills.
Even so, Walter, when old Time's entombed—
When o'er his grave the sons of God will chant
His requiem 'mid the clashing of the spheres—
When mortals merged in immortality,
Our sorrows, sufferings, will be forgot
In the fruition of eternity.

WALTER.

Amen, Oran, amen—such may we feel ;
And when safe landed on the farther shore,
We'll have a story for each other's ears,
About our pilgrimage through desert Earth,
And voyage o'er that river whose deep flow
Runs on incessant on the shore of Time ;
But now I must be gone—the morning's spent,
The sun's far up, and busy Day has called ;
So, Oran, till another time, adieu ! [Exit.

ORAN, *alone.*

Ah ! Walter, we may never meet on Earth :
The sun ascends the skies—mine sinks full low,
And night is at my heels ; and yet to leave

These haunts of infancy and riper years,
Calls up sweet memories of other times,
And starts the ready, though unbidden tear.
Oh! sweetly swell the harmonies of birds,
As on the boughs they sing their tales of love;
And beautiful is Heaven's cerulean vault,
Gold tipt with beams that sparkle from the crown
Of Day's great king;—the gentle mountain rill
Dances along, and murmurs songs of mirth,
As in its joyous course it hurries on
To wed the Ocean; while the meads and hills
Rejoice in Summer's gaudiest garniture,
That lavishly dispenses joys around.
In such a season let Death summon me,
And not when winter's frown the bosom chills:—

Yes, let me die in Summer,
When flowers are all in bloom;
With birds in full-voiced chorus,
To hymn around my tomb.

When from the bosky woodlands,
Swell melodies so fine,
That I feel my soul a-glowing,
With rapture all divine:

I love to watch the skylark
Mount high upon the wing,
And with love-heaving bosom,
To list its carolling:

I love to watch the streamlet,
So gently glide along,
And list its elfin murmurs
Awake the gush of song.

Then let me die in Summer,
When swells Earth's thrilling lyre;
And like the swan, in music
I'd have life's lamp expire.

Then calmly let me lie down in the tomb,
And wait the call that gives me liberty;
When, 'mid the whirling of expiring worlds,
I'll have my home in Eden's bowers in Heaven.
'Twere poor, indeed, if man but lived on Earth,
Without a future for the asking soul;
And all his solace but the gloomy grave,
In which to hide his sorrows and his pains;—
I will go forward, and unmoved, meet Death
As if an old familiar friend. No dread
Of a mysterious something puzzles now:
God's smile has clasped my heart, and now I feel
A yearning for the holy halls of Heaven.
'Tis over now!—Earth's vanities have fled,
And I would rest, and have a little sleep;
But, Walter, we will never meet on Earth,
Farewell, my brother, friend! we'll meet in Heaven.

SCENE THIRD.

NOON—A GARDEN—HELEN ALONE.

HELEN.

WHERE has my truant gone? Ah me! I fear
That gloomy man, Oran, eats up his time,
And throws a shadow o'er his warm full heart,
As dark as midnight, when no beamy stars
Light up the spacious galleries of Night.
Oh! what a tyrant Love makes woman's heart!—
The thing she loves, she'd take unto her bosom,
And nestle it there securely through all time—
Happy only in its rapt enjoyment.
Why looks the Earth so sad when Night has come,
To cheer her lonely hours with Moon and Stars?
Full well I know her grief can't be assuaged
Till Morn restores her back her lord, whose smile
Gives life again unto her quivering pulse.
Come, Walter, Helen is a lonely thing,
Whose heart is widowed if reft of that smile
On which she dotes even in her happy dreams,
And feels a joy as if in bowers of bliss,
Too holy and too rapturous for earth:
The blooming flowers look up, as if to court
A word of kindness on their loveliness;
And even the little warblers on the boughs,
Alive to all the joyousness of June,
Pour forth a gush of Heaven's own melodies,
At which the soul entranced, is upward borne,

And speechless lists at gate of Paradise.
But ah! this happy earth is nought to me,
So long as all alone I wander through
The Eden of my dreams. Aweary, weary—
I feel as one thrown on a barren isle,
Who, 'long the shore, with anxious step and eye,
Seeks for a mate to cheer his loneliness,
And make the wilderness a home of love.
Poor fluttering heart, like bird in prison cage,
Which flaps its wings against the cruel wires,
Yet all in vain again to soar on wing
Amid the fleecy clouds of Summer's sky.
What is this world of grandeur, pomp, and power,
If the affections of the heart be dead?
Away, false pomp, false grandeur, and false power;
Give me the heart I love, and though a beggar,
I would not mate with kingdomed lords of earth.
What hollow-hearted, oily-worded tongues
Affect emotions they can never feel
In palaces and proud Patrician halls,
Where Mammon reigns supreme o'er head and heart!
Away, away far from these haunts of guile
I'd seek me out some quiet secluded dell,
And live my years in humble pleasures, such
As Nature gives to peasant and to prince.
How calmly there the gliding years I'd note,
And count each day a bead of happiness;
And, as the years ran on, so string my treasure,
That when the last scene came, I might go forth
Into the morning of another world,

Wrapt up in hope that other joys more pure
 Might lap my soul, and as its circles ran,
 Increase, and with increasing, strengthen love.
 Ah! weary heart be quiet, soon will come
 Thy lord, and flush thee with his crown of love:
 I'll seek the bower, and 'mid its flowery shade
 Dream of those sweets that will my bosom fill,
 When Walter takes his plighted Helen home.

[She enters the bower and is heard singing:—]

Oh! 'tis the merry Summer-time,
 And Flora reigns as queen;
 Flowers are blooming—birds are singing—
 Why not last the scene?
 Ah! soon will come the Winter's gloom,
 And wither all that now doth bloom.

In my bosom, too, is springing
 Highest hopes of bliss;
 May no cloud of sorrow looming,
 Come and make them less.
 Oh! ever may such pleasures last,
 And future bless outvie the past.

But, amid my purest gladness,
 Oft will come pale Fear,
 That shrouds all in deepest sadness,
 And starts the traitorous tear;
 But, fears be hushed—so long as I
 Have Walter's love—I will not sigh.

[WALTER comes from behind the bower.]

WALTER.

I've stolen upon her privacy, and heard
The bitter wailing of her lonely heart,
And been confessor, though unseen, and now
I'll shrive her soul, and give her absolution :
Poor little timid bird, I'll give thee peace,
And banish all thy fears to other climes,
Ne'er to return and rob thee of thy rest.

[Comes forward and stands at the door of the bower.]

Asleep already? and, oh! what a scene
To fill the bosom with o'erflowing love—
Unquenchable as Etna's fiery breath ;
Or the artist's or the poet's mind inspire
With thrilling views of unsphered loveliness!
How heaves her bosom—like a tranquil sea
Making soft music to the moon and stars!
She smiles, and what a heaven is in that smile!—
'Twould make the fiends of darkness think of bliss,
And cry for mercy at the gates of heaven.
She speaks, and in her dreams she whispers, Walter!
I fear to wake her from such happy dreams,
And call her back to earth, though it be fair.

[Withdraws.]

[HELEN, coming out of the bower]—

HELEN.

Is Walter come?—I surely saw him smile!
Or was it all a dream? Deceitful dreams!
Ye dower us with imaginary wealth,

And when we wake we're poor. He has not come;
Ah, me! how sad and heavy is my heart!

[WALTER, *approaching*—

WALTER.

What?—what? in tears, my little Trojan Queen?
Come to my arms and I will brush them off
With this warm greeting; come, cheer thee, Helen,
And throw thy sorrow to the idle wind.

HELEN.

Oh! that dream!—methinks I see the hideous forms
That throw a shadow 'tween me and the sun.
Walter, will I recall what I have seen
In Dreamland's misty shades?

WALTER.

No, Helen, no;
If it gives pain we will forget the past,
And suck the honey from the present's comb.

HELEN.

My Walter, I've oft heard that dreams are but
The photographs of dim futurity;
And that their language, though but darkly uttered,
Yet have a meaning that should have our ear.

WALTER.

Well—well, my little Dreamer, let me hear
This dream that's set thy wits at fault, and given
A sickly hue unto those rosy cheeks.

I must confess I have no faith in dreams,
And if thou can'st convert me to the truth,
And ope mine eyes to Dreamland's mysteries,
Sure I'll believe thee, and will follow on
Though mankind laugh, and deem us visionaries
That live still in the future. I, Helen,
Could tell a dream I had but yesterday,
That hangs still on my soul!—Thou first, then I.

HELEN.

I was aweary, Walter, when I came
And found thee not beside the beechen tree;
I looked around me, and a joy was given
To all of earth—the meanest thing that bloomed
In Flora's garland wore a smile of joy;
For joy the warblers piped their sweetest songs,
And e'en the Sun, robed in his azure blue,
Threw on the happy earth a smile of joy;
But still my heart went heaving as a sea
That fears the rough embrace of Boreas;
I sought the bower, if haply there I might
In meditation reap some little peace:
Slumber lit on my eyes, and with a kiss
So soporiferous, closed my eyes on earth,
And led me through the mazy haunts of dreams.
Methought I paced a gorgeous hall of state,
Stored with the luxuries of sunny climes;
A thousand tapers gleamed, as if the Night
Had trimmed her myriad stars to celebrate
The nuptials of some spirit of the spheres;

And music fell upon the ears as if
The last light tread of Zephyr on the leaves ;
And happy hearts, and happy faces, too,
Were there, and smiling, quaffed the cup of joy ;
And I was there, yet was not one of those.
I felt as if I'd lost some precious gem
That could not be regained ; I scanned each face,
Yet not one of that vast and varied throng
Had that which I could love and call them friend.
I wandered through the hall, like one that strays
In idle fancy by the Ocean's shore,
And smiled to hear his wrathful fury break
In white-caped billows on the rugged rock.
I wondered why I was alone, but still
The thought that thou wert there possessed my soul,
And gave a pleasure, for I thought thou'dst come
Each moment and complete my budding joy.
I grew impatient as the lapse of time
But left the question still unanswered—Where?
Doubt swelled into a passion, and I flew
To seek thee in the garden, where I spied
Thee standing by a column counting stars.
Oh! could it be that Walter was unkind?
I schooled my heart, and thought could trust my tongue,
And when I neared thee, motionless and cold,
A wild fear made me speechless, as I gazed
And marked thee calmly, with a death pale face
And stony eye look on the silvery Moon,
As if thou'dst read the secret of her woe:
No motion—I forward crept—but still as cold—

What could it mean? Did vision play me false?
I faltered, Walter, and methought the form
Quivered all over; then I clutched its arm
And looked up to its face—when, Oh God! Oh God!
'Twas Walter!—yet 'twas Oran! and anon,
As half-awakened, a grim skeleton
Smiled on me with a hideous grin, and eyes
So awful in their meaning, that I woke,
Wondering what could it mean.

WALTER.

'Twas but the working of a heated brain:
'Tis past; we'll think no more on't.

HELEN.

But why comes Oran always in my thoughts
Whene'er I think of thee? That black, bad man,
With beetling brow, and eye that seeks the ground,
And words so light of all that's good on earth—
He comes as snail on fairest flower, and leaves
A trail that tells one of his withering step.
I've often wondered why you could have faith
In one who's branded as a Cain 'mong men;
And oft a fear has come lest he should make
The heart I cherish callous as his own,
And leave my little barque a hopeless wreck
When I had hoped I'd gained the happy isle.

WALTER.

Full oft 'twere difficult for us to tell,

Or give a reason why we hate or love ;
Had'st thou known Oran as I've known him, Helen,
There would, I know, be pity in thy heart
For all that he has suffered. We are one,
And God grant that till death it may be so,
And even in our after-state of being.
Yes, Helen, I could make thy gentle heart
Feel kindly yet for Oran : but my dream,
Or reverie, or what you choose to call it,
I'll give thee first.

HELEN.

Well, Walter, then for Oran,
And God have mercy if I am unjust !

WALTER.

Let me recall that dream of yesternight—
A dream ? perchance 'twas the embodiment
Of stern reality. Methought 'twas Eve—
A royal purple Eve of Autumn-time,
When wood and dell ring out the joyous notes
Of choristers upon the lofty boughs :
The twilight deepened into balmy Night,
When up, behind the hills, the Moon arose—
The broad-rimmed harvest Moon, and threw her sheen
Full on the heaving bosom of the Earth :
'Twas such a Night as wakens holy thoughts
When, wrapt in meditation, we ascend,
And high, still higher soar above the earth,
Till Stars, and Moon, and worlds are at our feet,

And bending low before the Eternal's throne,
We worship while we fear.

Methought I stood

Upon the summit of a lofty peak
That belched into the sea, and far and wide
The teeming landscape heaved with fruits and grain—
Heaven's bounteous gifts to man; a gentle breeze
Came from the mighty Deep, and cooled my brow
As if a love-gift for a favourite child.
'Tis solemn solitude—when, all alone,
Our very pulse or breathing makes us start
With apprehension of mysterious fears:
Not so I felt, as wonderingly I gazed
Upon the heaving of the ocean's breast,
And heard its waves rush madly on the rocks,
And raise a murmuring, wailing, plaintive sound
That touched the pensive heart, and wakened thoughts
That bore me off to Dreamland, where I saw
Such scenes I will not easily forget.

Along the margin of a winding stream
That murmured music in its devious course,
Two walked in silent and in thoughtful mood—
A maiden and a youth: I marked them well,
For in their silence I could read a tale
Too often read, and so familiar grown,
But little heeded, and too often scorned.
Onward they strayed—the maiden and the youth,
And neither spoke, but close communion kept
With their own hearts. 'Twas piteous thus to mark
These spirits clouded with despondency—

These bosoms heaving with a bitter pain,
Where beauty, truth, and virtue loved to dwell;
At length they reached their favourite, sacred haunt—
'Twas a sweet spot, and such as lovers love.
Close by the stream, and at a gentle curve,
A grot was scooped, with Flora's richest flowers
Garnished—a meet retreat for loving hearts:
They entered, and ere long the Zephyrs bore
This sad, sweet song unto my listening ears:—

The world is cold as the snow-wreathed wold,
While Mammon grasps its sway;
And wildering fears bring salt, salt tears
As our hopes die day by day;
And there are those
Who increase our woes,
Should our brave heart dare say, Nay.

This Mammon reigns with golden chains,
And the world still bows the knee;
But a traitor's grave be for the slave,
Who would not dare be free;
While our hearts are pure
We will endure,
And hope for Earth's jubilee.

Then why should we fear or drop a tear
Though the world to Mammon bow?
The summer of the heart will ne'er depart
So long as we are as now;

Then fear we'll defy,
And, till we die,
We'll be faithful to our vow.

I felt as if I could have knelt and prayed
For Heaven to turn their sorrow into joy,
And tune their hearts to joyous melody;
Poor, constant hearts! for pity I could weep
For trials such as yours. Haply, they think,
That now would sunder two such plighted hearts,
'Tis good it should be so. Oh! blinded fools!
Who can recall again, when once 'tis gone,
The heart's affection, warm and overflowing?
And who can recreate the beamy smile
When cold Despair has shrivelled up the soul,
And paralysed the joyous step of Love?
Would men were wise, and Self were less a god!
Then suffering and sorrow, too, would cease,
And we might hope for Eden once again
In this bare, cheerless world. But man is here
A pilgrim, and a pilgrim's lot is his;
A stranger walks he among stranger men
In quest of purer joys. God grant the day—
The day of Earth's redemption, may be soon,
When pæans shall from pole to pole proclaim
Man's immortality, and Earth's release.

HELEN.

Ha! you've been dreaming with your eyes wide oped,
And moralising on our happy Earth!

Oh, Earth! thou wert a Paradise indeed,
Were Mammon worshipped less and Heaven more!
Who can dispute this hideous Tyrant's power,
Whose words omnific in those hearts that cling
As grovelling devotees around his shrine,
Forgetful of those mercies that our God
Gives with that breath which answers with a curse?
I cannot look upon this joyous Earth—
Arrayed as for a bridal with her flowers,
And sunshine gilding all; but from within
I feel a prayer upwelling, and my tongue
Is tuned to praise, and my heart goes forward
And leans to all with sympathy and love.
But, Walter, now I'll hear thee speak of Oran:
I may be wrong, and would not wish to nurse
One bitter thought 'gainst him that calls thee—Friend.

WALTER.

I will begin at the beginning, Helen,
And be as brief as love and time permit:—
We two were friends in childhood, and the lapse
Of twenty summers and as many winters
Has but increased our friendship, and given strength
To those seeds, sown among the hills, in youth.
We two were boys of some six years, when first
Our hearts were knit together, in a bond
Not to be severed by the tread of Time.
Our homes were in the boisterous, surly North,—
In a deep ravine were our cottages,
Walled by huge, ragged, reeling rocks, that raised

Their heather-wreathed heads unto the sun
In all the majesty of kingly power.
A gentle stream meandered through the glen,
And in its tortuous course it glided past
Our humble homes. That sweetly-flowing stream
Is as a rich oasis in my heart,
To which I ever can return with joy ;
And oft I turn unto the North as turns
The pious Islamite to Mecca's walls,
Then, cheered to think the Prophet heard his prayer,
He plunges through the desert's sandy sea,
Nor deems too hard the toilsome, weary way.
Our lonely cots were sundered by this stream—
On either side was one : here, when the Morn
Came up all glowing from the opening East,
We'd meet, and while away the happy hours
In Childhood's vaunting spirit, of some deed
Done 'mong the hills. Perchance, with daring foot,
We'd climb the summit of the topmost peak,
And claimed the victor's noble meed of praise.
Perchance the eagle's eyry we had found,
And, with an equal daring, strove to take
Some palm of conquest to the vale below,—
Such and so varied was our childish talk
Ere nobler aspirations seized the soul,
That sent us hence in quest of other joys.
Our chief delight was by that stream to sit
And watch the progress of our tiny barques,
Bound, as we thought, to lands we knew not where,
But distant far from our own little world.

One day we were engaged, as oft we were,
In launching all our hopes upon the flood,
When Oran's barque was swamped; to reach his craft
He stretched, o'erbalanced, and sunk in the stream.
Fear paralysed me as I saw him rise,
And, with a piteous and soul-rending shriek
That echoed wildly 'mong the towering hills,
Sank down again. Madness came upon me,
For, scarcely knowing how to act, I plunged
Into the waters, and for Oran sought;
But timely aid came, and we two were took
And carried home, to all appearance, dead.
Long lingered we 'tween dubious night and day,
But hope, and health, and vigour soon returned.
Methinks I see him yet when first we met
After we struggled long 'tween death and life:
Methought he had grown old in years, his look
So calm, so serious, and so full of love,
Pierced me so keenly, and, I know not how,
Tears started in my eyes; I sobbed, I wept
As if my swelling bosom would have burst.
We rose impulsive, and, in one long embrace,
Pressed heart to heart, and, from that moment, we
Were as twin-brothers, both in heart and aim.
We grew in thought as we grew up in years,
And schemes of high resolve filled our young hearts,
As vague, yet as enthusiastic, as
E'er fanned the spark of patriotic zeal
Into a flame, that curbed a Tyrant's power,
And saved the liberties of fatherland:

And hopeful too, as e'er stayed up the heart
Of bold Columbus, when he cut his way
Through unknown seas to find Columbia.
'Twas thus we spun out those slow-moving years
That hang 'tween youth and manhood. But a change
Came over Oran—such a change as makes
The heart more wise in one of Time's short steps
Than all the whirling incidents of years.
I can recall that Morn—'twas Summer-time—
We sought our favourite seat far down the glen:
'Twas rich in beauty!—at our feet the stream
Murmured in softest cadences—the birds,
Housed on the branches of an aged oak
That gave cool shelter, sang their sweetest songs
Above our heads—and Oran's breast upheaved,
His eyes lit up with more than earthly fire,
While in the fulness of his heart he sung:—

“The night was cold, and the wind blew high,
And the rain came down in a drenching shower;
God shelter the Poor from the storm-king's power,
And give them a joy to smother their sigh:
Thus I thought as I sat by the cheerful fire,
When a feeble tap was heard on the door,
And a voice, that seemed with each tone to expire
Whispered faintly, ‘Have mercy, and pity the Poor!’

“'Twas a frail old man, and his locks were grey,
And he stooped with the burden of many years;
And his cheeks were furrowed with bitter tears

As he thought on the scenes that had past away.
I pitied the poor frail wreck of age,
And gave him a seat by the blazing fire ;
And with cheerful chat I strove to assuage
His sorrows that sprung from a fate most dire.

“ He shook his hand, as he said, ‘ Young man,
Our life’s but a varied scene of change ;
Yet youth will us heedlessly, thoughtlessly range,
As if fourscore girt not their little span.
I have seen the young and the old decay,
And last of all of my kin am I ;
With feeble step I wend my way
O’er earth, and only wish to die.

“ ‘ No home have I, and none whose love
Might give a ray of hope to age ;
’Tis sorrow all, and with grief I wage
A war that will close with peace above ;
But, Oh ! ’tis a lonely, weary lot,
From door to door to wander and crave :
’Tis the curse of that soul, by man forgot,
And whose solace is found in the greedy grave.’

“ ‘ Poor man,’ I said, ‘ you have wandered far,
And God’s broad Earth gives you no rest ;
But sorrow has lodged in that troubled breast,
And chequered life with an evil star.
Strange homes and stranger faces you’ve seen ;
God wot, I know you’ve a curious tale—

Come, picture the haunts where you have been,
And map the rocks, that I may not fail'

" 'I may not tell,' the old man began,
 'What I've seen through fourscore and ten,
 'Tis a curious study, with subtle ken,
To fathom the daring heart of man :
I spent my youth in a dense thronged town,
 Where nightly prowls the lovers of sin ;
Whose hearts the claims of virtue disown,
And nurse the raging hell within :

" And I grew up, as the plant grows up,
 Whose parent soil is the barren wild ;
 No love of a mother upon me smiled—
No kindly hand gave the kindly cup.
From Morn till Eve and from Eve till Morn,
 I wept and cried for a heart to love ;
None came, and my bosom with sorrow torn,
 Began to doubt the Heaven above :

" And thoughts—white flaming thoughts had birth,
 And rebel words danced upon my tongue ;
 No peace was there, for my bosom wrung
With what transpired on our happy Earth.
Maddened, I cursed the ways of Heaven—
 Could this be our lots and God be just ?
To the Proud and Haughty, wealth was given,
 And the Poor must live on Poverty's crust :

“As of old they fled from that city doomed,
So fled I, yet I know not where;
Within were battlings with despair,
Which the joyous light of life entombed.
I heedlessly wandered on and on,
Till Night came down with her darkening plume,
By a mansion gate I stood alone,
Which glared as a meteor through the gloom:

“And weary and lone, from that lordly hall,
There came an old and sorrowful man;
I strove his shaded face to scan,
As the dazzling light flashed upon the wall.
I felt as if a brother I'd found,
And said, Good Sir, may I speak with thee?
I'm a stranger here: he turning round,
And smiling, said, Then come with me:

“From this fearful place of sin—away!
The soul's own slaughter-house is this;
Here the Syren smiles, and with a kiss
Lures man to ruin day by day.
I've watched and prayed for those who came
To quaff the goblet of Pleasure here;
They came, but returned without a name,
O'er whom pale Pity shed a tear.

Oh God!—Oh God! when will man be wise—
When shatter the fetters of bloated vice—
When free from its every poisonous device,

And look from earth beyond the skies?
My friend—Oh! let not another's crime
Be a hinderance to thy purpose high!
As yet thy life is but its prime—
Then onward for the victory.

“But think not that, when the body dies,
The soul becomes but a piece of clay;
'Tis false as hell!—for there's a day
On the wing with awful destinies.
Let Pleasure's votaries revel at will,
And laugh at blessings so richly given;
Time will his term of years fulfil,
And strike them dumb with the frowns of Heaven.’

“As the old man ceased, he turned aside,
And was gone, as if a spirit of air;
I muttered an inarticulate prayer,
And vainly struggled my fears to hide.
But from that hour I've learned to live
As I had never lived before,
And feel content with what Heaven may give
As His happy earth I wander o'er.

“I've wandered far, and much have seen,
At home—abroad—in peace, and war;
And bear with me full many a scar,
For life a grievous battle has been;
Yet that will pass, and a brighter day
Disclose Eternity sublime—

With Heaven's seraphic minstrelsy
Singing the requiem of Time."

He ended, and as fell the last low note,
He said, This, Walter, is a curious world :
Gold is all-powerful for the life that is,
But what for that to come? I would not have
The wealth of Croesus, if that wealth sealed up
The kindly impulse of the soul that prompt
To thaw the icy tear on Sorrow's cheek,
And make the heart of Care leap forth with joy,
And think more kindly of the Heaven which gives.
I'd rather be an outcast Lazarus—
Abhorred of all, save Heaven so merciful,
Than royal-pampered Dives, with liveried train,
Yet left to beg at every door in hell.
We're wondrous wise in this enlightened age !
Books, as messengers, speeding to and fro,
Have lit the torch of Knowledge o'er the earth,
And oped the well-springs of Philosophy ;
Yet there's a wondrous book, but little read—
Its value quite unknown—that book's the heart ;
And in a knowledge of its secret depths
The wisest of us are the veriest fools.
We go full soon to mix in yonder city,
Whose groans of misery reach us, even here,
And fill the heart with dread ; yet we must brave
The stormy billows of a city life,
And steer all safely off its hidden rocks,
To gain our port in safety. Yet, e'en here,

To watch the smile of Nature beam on all,
So soft, so full, so sweetly, so divine,
The heart feels nigher to the gates of bliss,
With Nature, roaming through her sylvan haunts,
Than walled in cities, with their streets of stone,
With naught to keep the love of Nature pure,
Save Night when she puts on her crown of stars.

We left our homes in the beloved North,
With many prayers and counsels wisely given ;
Would we'd remembered ! Oran soon was changed,
But not till he achieved primus, and
His fellows looked to him with beating hearts.
Thus toiled we on until our fourth term closed,
And not till then had I marked any change
Come over Oran ; but, dark daring thoughts
Thronged through his mind, as through a troubled sky
The widowed Moon is seen to course, as if
The envious storm-king, on his snorting steeds,
Pursued the solitary Queen of Night,
To grasp her silvery and star-jewelled crown,
And reign, the undisputed King, o'er all
The vast expanse that owned her gentle sway.
He had become a sceptic in all truth,
And Heaven and immortality were myths,
The idle fancies of some idle minds.
At length I had the secret of his grief,
And God have mercy on each trusting heart
That has the same to bear. Oran had loved,
But was unhappy, Helen, in his love :
He yielded up the offering of a heart,

Rich in Affection's wealth; yet that was scorned,
And she, the idol of his every hope,
Forsook him, and for Mammon laughed at vows
So often ratified, and Heaven their witness.
Then, Oh! my Helen, kindly think of Oran;
For, when the heart feels the repulse of love,
And that the power of wealth outweighs affection,
Then Heaven may smile, but smiles in vain to win
The shattered heart to trust the future, and
Forget the past as one forgets a dream.
Oran has suffered, and his sorrow casts
A gloom o'er all his character to those
Who know him not, as I, from infancy,
Have been his sole companion, and have known
Each thought that welled up in his kindly breast—
Each holy aspiration that led on
His daring steps toward the hill of Fame;
For, as twin-brothers were we, yet Oran
Was my superior in his grasp of knowledge,
And stood as one whom I could reverently
Look to as to a father for a guide,
And lead through each dread interstice of life.
Come then, Helen, cast suspicion from thee,
And think not harshly of my friend, Oran:
He is absorbed in his own world—the past;
The present's nought to him, and the future
To him is cold and dark as wintry night
To 'wildered wanderer on a pathless moor.
I've reasoned with him, and methinks he feels
A reawakening of that clouded hope—
Love buds on earth to blossom full in heaven.

HELEN.

God grant it may be so!—Oran has loved,
And she he trusted dashed Love's chalice down,
And to her bosom took a thing of gold—
A grey-beard—with a heart that gloated o'er
The gold he sinned for, and had never felt
The soft, persuasive influence of Love.
Woman, abashed! look up to perjured Heaven,
And for the awful wrong, plead—plead that God
May yet have mercy on that rifled heart,
And safely lead Oran to trust His love.
Poor Oran! I now can think more kindly,
And each harsh thought I'll pluck up by its roots,
And smile upon him, Walter, with a smile
That will dispel the clouds that wrap his soul
In Doubt's deep night, through which he cannot see
His Father's eyes with pity rest on him,
And deaf to all, save his big sorrow's groans,
He shuts all out save his own miseries.
I've often thought he had some secret grief,
Or that Ambition had so changed his soul
That he looked down upon the happy hearts
With whom he mingled, as if Mirth brought back
Some bitter memories of other years,
And oped afresh the wound time might have closed;
Or, that Ambition had dried up the springs
Of social intercourse, and all the joys
That spring to life when heart meets heart in love.
Walter, our friend, Oran, disowns his God,
Mistrusts his fellow-man, and woman's love

To him's but Jonah's gourd, which had its birth
From Night, and perished with the Morning's sun.
He wanders wildly, and he wists not of
The awful future-doom of that lone soul,
Which, as a maniac, laughs at heaven and hell,
And idly talks of an omnific God
As but the phantom-fear of coward hearts
That dread to traverse the grave's gloomy halls.
Walter, Oran has clenched his fists 'gainst Heaven,
And in his agony forgot *His* love—
Forgot each tender tie that bound to earth,
And forgot that hope which shines above the tomb
To guide the travellers to another world.
If Oran yearneth after the Infinite,
And would away from earth, whose sorrows cloak
The soul in darkness—then, Oh! lead him up,
And, from the pinnacle of Faith, disclose
The wondrous beauties of that better Morn
When earth recedes and Heaven clasps the soul.

WALTER.

Earth, Helen, has no farther claim on Oran!
He looks beyond the boundaries of Time,
And sees Eternity outstretching far,
As if an unknown and untraversed wild
O'er which the fathers and the sons of Earth
Have gone in search of the oasis, but
None have returned to answer what he asks;
And yet he cannot, with an infant's love,
Confide in God, and though the hour be dark,

Trust Him to lead his wandering steps to light.
Upon his heart he feels the hand of Death,
And to die young must be an ordeal
That tests the soul severely; let us hope
The clouds will pass away, and when the Eve
Of life comes down upon him, he may smile
When Death proclaims his liberty, and earth
Sinks low and lower as his soul ascends
To swell the chorus of the ransomed ones.

HELEN.

Oh! that our hopes were fruited, and our friend
At peace with all—e'en God and his own heart,
And only waited for his mission hence,
As waits a stranger on a stranger's shore—
To trust the treacherous deep to gain that spot
Where wife and children wait to welcome home:
May God have pity on his shattered heart,
And from his sufferings take him to Himself!

WALTER.

God will have pity, and Oran shall yet
Look up to Heaven with pious eyes, as one
That longs to hear the seraphs, with their harps,
Raise the loud anthem of immortal love.

But, Helen, time steals on our heels, and we
Have met and now must part. Have courage, Love;
Earth gives no promise of a meeting here
Without a separation—Heaven alone
Can promise and fulfil the precious boon.

HELEN.

Away so soon? Ah! no—my Walter, stay;
Love is so selfish, one could never tire
In fondling with the object of her love.
Come, come, I must not daub the niggard yet—
Some other time for study must suffice,
I have thee, and will keep thee captive-knight,
Till thou shalt give such ransom as will tempt
This heart to part with thee. Come, see my flowers,
How beautiful they are—how soon will fade,
As fades the richest, fairest thing on earth!

WALTER.

Well, my little Queen, here, your captive-knight,
In humble loyalty, now bends the knee,
And waits your every wish.

HELEN.

Now, that will do;
I see you'll learn your lessons by and by.

SCENE FOURTH.

EVENING—ORAN'S ROOM—ORAN ASLEEP.

[EMMA, *disguised as Nurse.*]

EMMA.

Asleep?—he wrought well for this little rest:
The doctor says that Death is very near,
And he must leave us soon. Oran, alas!

Thou'rt posting where there's thousands wish to go,
And rid themselves of Earth's hypocrisy ;
But that they fear to trust the great Unknown,
That stretches out into Eternity
Beyond the gloomy precincts of the tomb.
Hush ! he speaks—what ? Oh ! whispered he that name,
And in his dreams thinks of those joyous days,
When, happy in each other's love, we lived
Content, and dreamt not of our future fates,
Ere cursed Ambition pillaged both our hearts,
And wrecked our barques upon the shores of Hope ?
Yes, I was cruel, Oran, and thy love,
That oft had cheered me in the Morn of life,
I prized but lightly, when I cast thee off,
And knelt at Mammon's shrine ; yes, knelt to find
How one rash act had doomed me to despair—
Had closed upon me Heaven's gracious door,
At which I sued, but sued in vain, for peace.
Ah ! who can know, save the Omniscient One,
The dread volcano that upheaved my breast,
When first I trode the gorgeous halls of state,
Where Affectation had usurped Love's throne,
And sleek Hypocrisy, with facile tongue,
Would prate on good it had no heart to feel,
And never practised what it loved to teach ?
Oh God ! have mercy on this erring heart,
And ere Oran departs, grant—grant this boon :
That he may bless me with but one kind word,
And say that Emma he can now forgive,
And look into the future, with a hope

To live anew our life of love in heaven.
What soul-delusive hope is this? Alas!
The future will as dark to Emma prove
As the cold, sinful past. I feel 'tis just,
For I have perjured Heaven, and Truth, and Love,
By one rash act, whose memories awake
The awful torments of a heart on fire,
That rushes on and wildly shrieks for help,
When none can ease its maddening agony.
Accursed, abandoned of my sex, outcast,
Yea, worse than that, a cruel murderess,
For I have slain the truest heart that Love
E'er warmed for woman, with celestial fire.
Will he discover, through this dark disguise,
His once loved Emma?—Oh! may God forefend!
I'd hear the wailing of his bruised heart
Unknown to him, and wean him from his woe:
Be true, frail heart, thy sufferance must be light,
Compared with Oran's leprous load for years.
He speaks again—Oh! how those words have caught
My feeble breath, and chilled my very soul,
And make me hateful even to myself!

[ORAN, *speaking faintly*—

ORAN.

I was in heaven, and saw my mother there;
She smiled upon me, and her words were sweet—
Sweet as the zephyrs which the flowers perfume:
She said I'd soon be with her, and she longed

To wander with me by the stream of life,
And hear me tell my story of the Earth :
Night closes in upon me, and I feel
To die is joy.

[EMMA, *aside*]

EMMA.

Oh, gracious Father! thanks,
If thanks from lips polluted reach Thine ear.

ORAN.

What have I now to live for?—all is done :
God calls me home, and who can say Him, Nay?
I once had other hopes—long, long ago—
When Emma's love gave me a purpose high,
To do and dare, if haply I might write
My name with those, whose memories are green,
Though they are sleeping with the ages now.
My poor deluded Emma—where is she?
Would she were here, that, ere Death summoned hence,
I might forgive the wrong and give a blessing!
May she be happy, and from God receive
A benison of peace, and when life's o'er,
In safety enter the abodes of bliss.
She did it, let me hope, in ignorance,
And may the glare and glitter of her state
Not bind her heart to earth, and shut out heaven.

[*A pause.*

[EMMA, *overcome, is sobbing*]

Who weeps?—my nurse; poor, tender-hearted thing;
I must not speak so much. *[A pause—he slumbers.]*

[EMMA, aside]—

EMMA.

Is the storm over?—Is his soul at length
Friendly with heaven and earth? Oh God! what joy
Has birth within me by these utterances!
Yes, Oran, follies of my other years
Are buried with the past. A light has dawned
Upon the dense, deep darkness of my soul,
And taught unhappy Emma such a truth
As when the soul, half-poised on seraph wings,
Takes one long, lingering, wistful look of earth,
Then soars away amid the darkening light,
And lost, at length, to all of mortal ken,
Amid the mists that veil Eternity.
Oh! let me take another lingering look
Of that dear face—how changed! Sorrow has ploughed
Her withering furrows there—the eyes are glazed
And lost their meaning, which were wont to shine
As brightly as the eagle's on the sun!
Oh! what a wreck is here, and I the cause!
Whichever way I turn, methinks I hear
Some cut-throat laugh of demons, whose delight
Is centred in another's misery;
This, this my work, and I to hope for heaven,
Oh! no, no, no! unhappy Emma, thrust
Alike from heaven as from her Oran's heart!

[Weeps passionately.]

ORAN.

I dream—I dream! and sure 'twas Emma's voice!
Oh God! am I deceived? Come, gentle Emma,
I do remember thee in Love's rich Morn,
So beautiful, so innocent, so meek,—
Ere the dark ways of this corruptive world
Led thee to ruin, and those memories
Shall go down with me to the silent tomb.
Is that another sob? What, nurse, in tears?
Poor gentle soul! Come near, nurse; I would speak,
And leave a message to thy loving trust.

[EMMA approaches.

Thou'st heard me speak of Emma, nurse, well, well;
'Tis a long story of another time,
And—and I cannot wander through the past
As once I could—this faint and quivering breath,
This icy coldness at my heaving heart,
As prophets of the future, tell me Oran
Will soon be with his fathers; and his name,
Remembered as an idle tale of youth,
And all the memories that once he was,
Be as the footprint on the sandy beach,
Which the fierce, hungry sea, with maddening power,
Rolls over—and 'tis gone. There's a packet!
When Oran is no more, give it to Emma,
And tell her we will meet, when time has fled,
In some sweet bower of Paradise, and there
Through the continuous Summer-day, rehearse
Our sorrows and our joyancings of earth.
And tell her Oran kept the first fond gift,

Close to his heart to feel its latest throb,
And that will be for Emma.

EMMA.

Oh! Oran,
Emma is here—an outcast, worthless thing—
And on her knees would crave forgiveness,
For that she fears that Heaven can ne'er forgive.

ORAN.

'Twas then no dream—no fancy of the brain ;
But thou, my long-lost, long-loved Emma, here !
Returned to Oran, as the dove of peace—
To cheer his heart ere mounts his soul away,
To swell with ecstasy the seraphs' song !
Years have sped backwards, Emma, and we've met,
As once we met, and heart leaps now to heart
Fondly as in the morning of our joy,
When budded in our souls the flower of love.
All is forgiven, and Heaven has heard my prayer ;
And now I'd sleep—sleep in the arms of Death,
Till yon bright Morn recalls us into life.
Ah! Emma, such a meeting, after years
Of lonely pilgrimage, without a hope
Of peace, for time or for eternity.
Oh God! I thank Thee for this precious gift—
This earnest of a greater yet in store ;
And when Thy voice is heard, that I should go,
Take, and lead Emma after, that in heaven
We may be more than when upon the earth.

Cheer, cheer thee, Emma, 'tis the close of Eve,
And Morning's smile brings joy. Now thou art here,
My cup o'erflows with such a draught of bliss,
I could wish still to live. But, Emma, no;
The Eternal's fiat has gone forth, and I
Would bow submissive to my Father's will:
They hover 'round me those bright ministers,
And now, methinks, I hear them whisper me
To come away and join the choiric band.

EMMA.

Oh! Oran, stay—not yet—a little while,
Then haply we may rest together;—stay,
I cannot think that we must sever thus.

ORAN.

It must be; let me lean my weary head
Thus on thy bosom. Now, 'tis sweet to die!
Oh! I am weary, Emma—I will rest,
And fain would reach my home; 'tis over now,
Farewell! my first, my only love, farewell!
We'll meet, my Emma—we will meet in Heaven.

EMMA.

Dead? Ah, me! but gone to a better world!
Oh God! have mercy, and let Emma lie
With Oran in one grave! [*She swoons away.*]

[WALTER, entering]—

WALTER.

Still as midnight, ere the tongue of Time
Awakes the echoes in their secret caves—
What means this? Is it death? so still, so cold—
Oh God! the living with the dead.

[EMMA, *recovering*].—

EMMA.

They have stolen Oran,—stranger faces came
And took my lord away!—they laughed at Emma,
And said she took his life!—who says I killed?—
I drew not the knife, as Heaven's my witness!
There is no blood upon these hands he kissed,
And ere he went he called me his own Love,
And said we'd meet again. But when and where?
He must come back and crown me with his love.

[WALTER, *aside*].—

WALTER.

It has gone home and pierced her through the heart,
And crazed her brain.

EMMA.

Ha! what and who art thou?
I know thee not!—hence, thou eavesdropper, hence!
Those cold and damning eyes eat through my soul,
And make me wretched; yet I'd look on thee,—
Those eyes are not unkind,—they do not scorn me,

But haply sympathise with poor Emma,
When they have ta'en her Oran from her arms,
While yet a blessing lingered on his lips,
And all the sorrow of the past forgot
In what the happy future would reveal.
My Oran sleeps!—methought some cruel spirits
Had stolen him from me, and left me to weep,
Like Melancholy, o'er a hallowed urn.

[WALTER, *aside*].—

WALTER.

Would tears would come and water this fierce heat
That makes the throne of Reason totter, and
Shuts out the light of Heaven.

EMMA.

Wouldst like me sing?
Or dance, or tell thee, friend, an old, old story?
Well, here is one—a sorry, sorry one,
But yet 'tis one I like full well; 'tis one
A wandering spirit whispered in my ear
As I lay dreaming of that paradise
I bartered for cursed Mammon's golden pear.
'Tis of that maid called Melancholy, list—

I saw her pass one sunny April morn—
With pensive step she tript the dewy lawn;
And oft she sighed, and her dishevelled locks
The ruthless breeze tossed wantonly. Thus on
She strayed, and now would wildly clasp her brow

As if some bitter thought had suddenly
Recalled her memory from its airy flight ;
And then anon she'd halt, and anxiously
O'er the wide prospect cast her wistful eyes
As if afraid of aught of human kind ;
Then, like the hart, when conscious of pursuit,
As grates upon his ear the hounds' deep bay—
She hurried o'er the plain in fearful flight.
The weeping willow that o'erhangs the brook
She sought, and there reclined, how fair—
A tearful Beauty of perfection rare !
The birds sang sweetly, but no charms had they
As on the past she mused, and pensively
Surveyed the present with a clouded eye.
She struck her harp, and soothed her bleeding heart,
Surcharged with care, with this rough snatch of song :—

My heart is aweary, weary,—
Ever heaving the heavy sigh ;
And all seems so lonely and dreary
While Grief ever hovers nigh.

Fond hearts, as the dew of the morning,
Are fading and passing away ;
No more they with bland smiles adorning,
Life's rugged and perilous way.

I mark the lark soar i' the morning air—
The sportive lambs frisk on the lea ;
And Flora's sweet flowerets blossom fair,
But—they bring no pleasure to me.

My home now no longer is cheerful
With those that once gladdened my heart,
And hushed are those voices so mirthful,
Elated with each childish art.

My home's now a home of sorrow :
Death's chilly and withering blast
Blew keenly upon it one morrow,
And nipt all its buds as he past.

She ceased and sighed, "Ah, me! a weary lot
Is mine!—to cheer no star of hope appears;
The serpent coils around my inmost core,
And Nature, clad in sombre gloominess,
Looks down upon me with reproachful eye.
Oh! is it sin to mourn—to weep for those
Who never can return with placid smile,
To long to be with them within the veil?
If so, if so—Oh! may I be forgiven!"
And so the poor lost maiden stood and wept
Most piteously, and none were there to sooth
As now I weep for Oran. [*She weeps.*]

[WALTER, *aside*]—

WALTER.

Oh God! I thank Thee, that Thou hast had mercy,
And given her relief!

[To EMMA]—

I was his friend
In life, and Emma, at his death I'm thine.
I've known his sorrows and his sufferings, and
Forgive as heartily as he forgave.
God is our common Judge—with Him remains
Our future destiny—and not for man
In time his erring fellow to prejudice.
Look up to Heaven, and for His mercy plead,
And He will grant a blessing in thy need ;
He never turned a beggar from His door
That cried for mercy !

EMMA.

Yes, yes, He blesses
When we know it not ; yet, can I look up
And ask a blessing—I, whose hands are red
With crime more daring than a Cain e'er dreamt of
When meditating on a brother's life ?
Ah, no ! no !—I cannot hope for mercy ;
But down to the dark Future I must go,
And, in its depths profound, there sit and weep
O'er all my reckless perfidy on earth,
That shuts me out from heaven, from God, and Oran,
Without one hope of bliss !

WALTER.

Said Oran so,
Ere angels bore his spirit up to heaven ?

EMMA.

Oh! no; he said, 'Twas Eve, and with the Morn
A joy would come, and we would meet again.

WALTER.

Have faith then, Emma, God will not cast off
His Oran's dying prayer. That Morn will come,
And Oran welcome Emma yet to heaven.

EMMA.

I would commune with God; henceforth this world
Is blanked to me. If, from the heavens above,
A star lights up the darkness of my soul
Ere night close in upon me, then I'll know
There's hope beyond the tomb. Oh! I will wait,
And count the moments as they speed along
Most miserly, and hope, and hope for light,
To lead me on in safety through the gloom
That hides that other world of bliss from ours.

WALTER.

The 'dead commands our duties; trust, Emma,
This last, sad act to Walter. Another time,
And we will talk of Oran and the future;
Meantime God has been with us—let our hearts
Bow and acknowledge Him, and trust the cloud
Will soon pass over and reveal His love.

SCENE FIFTH.

MIDNIGHT—STUDENTS MET.

ALF.

WE hold our holiday by taperlight,
And, till Aurora ope the gates of day,
The wine will pass, and merry song go round.
Come, Frank, I call on you to warm our blood
With some wild-love creation of your brain.

FRANK.

Have you but patience, and I'll give you one
Which, when you've heard, you'll laugh at woman's love,
And man that trusts it.

Oh! desolate and wretched here,
Though far from all apart;
Though from my eyes there drops no tear,
Yet feel I still an inward fear
Consume my troubled heart.

I've found no balmy peace of mind
In this sequestered spot;
The world I've vainly left behind,
That sweet serenity to find—
The fabled hermit's lot.


At cheerful Morn and pensive Night
My heart is moody still;
The charms of Nature no delight
Can bring to ease the woeful plight
Of a distracted will.

In vain I've sought this hermitage
Where Solitude doth dwell;
Ah! well-a-day, naught can assuage
The ills 'gainst which I madly wage,
Their poignancy to quell.

At Morn I list the warbler's lay,
With melody so sweet;
But that recalls that painful day
('Twas in the sunny month of May),
I lay at Nora's feet;—

And whispered in her listless ear
My love, my hopes, my fears;
And dreamt not that a rival near
My fond soul's every breath did hear,
And triumphed in my tears.

In vain I pled—my beating heart
Poured forth in vain its sighs;
No word—no smile, could love impart,
But Disappointment's cruel dart
Shot from her beamy eyes.



Wild Frenzy coursed through every vein,
I rose in heart deprest;
Then sank upon the sward again,
And speechless, by her cold disdain,
My soul was all unrest.

How long I lay I cannot tell—
I was as one that's dead;
Methought she coldly said, Farewell!
Harsh was that hope-destroying knell,
For with it Peace had fled.

I woke, to find myself alone—
Fierce madness fired my breast;
All peace of mind—all hope was flown,
And wildly reckless I had grown
With bitter thoughts opprest.

'Twas then a father's house I fled,
And sought this solitude.
Here have I idly dreamt, and led
Long years of meditation, wed
To streamlet and to wood.

But what can meditation yield
To calm the troubled soul,
While all that's blissful is concealed,
And naught of Hope's bright beams revealed
My wanderings to control?

Still yearly, as returns the day,
That day my home I fled,
Sad memories will come and slay
All fancied peace—I vainly pray
And wish me with the dead.

ALF.

Has Frank, too, bit the earth 'neath woman's foot,
And gives himself a breathing in disguise
Of some bald-pated monk? Beshrew thee, friend—
Such a confession is for holy ears!
For instance, Father Walter, who will shrive thee,
And send thee "*Pax vobiscum*," the day after
To catch another wild goose in the bush.
But have a care, there's danger in such sport,
And who knows that the issue may not be
A bathe in some cold stream, or haply, when
The Moon is at her zenith, in a mood
Of absent melancholy, he may reach
Some dangerous precipice, and thence plunge down
Into the awful, yawning deep below,
And find a resting for his shattered bones—
Not on a couch of down? Look to it, friend;
A friendly voice in time is worth your ears,
And, when too late, you'll curse your evil star,
And, in a passion of profound conceit,
Shake your clenched fists at Heaven. Now, bumpers all,
And more success to Frank when next he'll cruise
To find that Eldorado of the soul,—
A woman faithful to her plighted troth.

ALL

Success to Frank, and to his Eldorado!

ALF.

We rise above the meaner things of earth
As flows the ruby nectar. Let us quaff
The rich blood of the vine, and be immortal.
The hours speed merrily on, and Morning's dawn
Will soon be at our heels. The sober Moon
Is slowly veering to her early bed,
Sick of her lonely travel through the sky:
Keep pace, brave hearts, and for another song
Or story I now lift my regal wand,
And call on moralising Harry next.

HARRY.

Most noble Liege, none dare thy wish dispute,
And least of all thy loyal subjects, I,
Who cannot reckon all the acts of love
Thy favour metes out to me.

ALF.

Well, proceed:

We wish no compliments to-night—the song,
And in some idle hour we'll list thy flattery.

HARRY.

A simple train of thought ran through my mind,
As on my mental vision scenes arose

Of grandeur and of poverty. Methought
Some strange, unearthly guide led on my steps,
And showed me such a scene as Memory
Can ne'er forget ;—this is the old man's tale :

The tapers gleamed and music swelled with measured
rise and fall,
And happy eyes beamed full of love within the Baron's
hall,
There Life is surely fair, he said ; its pleasure and its joy
The bosom fill with happiness, unmingled with alloy :

There sat the Baron crowned with years, his wavy, hoary
hair
Hung graceful o'er his shoulders, and gave him a saint-
like air ;—
While round him thronged fond-loving hearts and love-
awakening eyes,
He gazed and thought, Could man wish more in earthly
paradise ?

He said, Come, sons of Wealth, and ask if Life indeed
be fair,
Of him whose bosom long has felt the wound of deep
despair ;
Go :—seek the Student—enter in his room, so cold and
damp,
And mark that care-worn visage pale, whereon is writ
the stamp

Of Disappointment, cruel nurse, that stabbed his love-
warm heart,

And chilled his soul's most holy wish by her relentless
dart—

There, in the lonesome noon of Night, he sits with brow
of care,

And well, I ween, he dreams not that this life is wondrous
fair :

Yet night by night he constant keeps his vigils in that
room,

Though hours of weary toil will sap his manhood's freshy
bloom :

His sallow, sunken cheeks bespeak the workings of
disease,

And the wild-rolling eye-balls tell of one that's reft of
ease :

He looks on Life, and what is it?—a desert bleak and
wild—

A wilderness wherein is nought for sad Misfortune's
child :

His fate is hard—he sinks beneath the burden of his lot,
Though well he strove—unknelled by Fame—and soon
will be forgot :

Ah! sons of Opulence, bethink what hardships such
endure,

How Genius often is entombed when nursed among the
poor ;

The moorland cot, the lonely shed, have often claimed a
soul
Through which did the wild fervour of rapt Inspiration
roll.

Yet, trammelled down—they could not rise—their bosoms
felt the smart,
E'en as the eagle, in whose breast is fixed the burning
dart.
To such, whose fondest hopes have fled, ye sons of Wealth
repair,
And e'en, despite their sickly gaze, say, Life indeed is fair.

But come, I'll lead thee to a spot, and there thou'lt read
a tale
That might the stoniest bosom touch, and make the
cheeks grow pale.
Here is that spot—Oh! mark it well—a lone unnoted
grave;—
Yet rests there one whose daring soul did Life's fierce
battles brave.

Ah! he was noble, and thou'dst loved, though lowly was
his guise.
But all unknown, though not forgot by rustics, here he
lies.
Son of Misfortune! 'bove thy head a sculptured stone
might tell
Of more than those o'er whom the domes of boastful
marble swell.

Say not to such that Life is fair—'tis mockery, 'tis guilt ;
Say rather that 'tis not a sin when murderous hands have
 spilt
The flood of life and stilled the heart. Oh ! from you
 azure deep
Well may the seraphs, bending down, o'er such in sorrow
 weep.

The Sun may shine with fulgent show, but soon, anon, a
 cloud
May all his gorgeous grandeur robe in tempest's mirky
 shroud ;
And thou may wealth's rich beams enjoy, nor suffer pain
 nor care ;
Yet poverty enclouds the poor, and all is darkness there.

There be who say that Life is fair ; alas ! they little know
What 'tis to grapple hard with Fate, and brave unpitied
 woe ;
To struggle still, and battle on, through weary years of
 pain—
Now raised on high with hope, and then dashed down to
 earth again.

Ask not the devotees of Wealth to tell thee what is Life,
Seek not those proud patrician halls, where luxury is rife—
If thou wouldst learn the solemn truth, go—rather seek
 the poor,
And from their wan and sickly looks thine answer thou'lt
 secure.

ALF.

There, there, we've had enough ; Harry was sure
To give our heads another ache with thought,
When we've let loose the reins for merriment,
And all the license Pleasure's court can give.
What, ho ! my friend, think'st thou our royal self
Need such a puritanic preacher, thus
To lash us with a lecture of such stuff?
Away ! in future we will be more chary,
And hold thee at thy worth.

HARRY.

If I offend,
Let my blunt speech apologise, and find
Some little favour at your royal hands.

ALF.

I'm king to-night, and so must be obeyed ;
Another word, and— [CARLOS enters.

CARLOS.

My friends, a stranger waits,
And wishes speedy entrance. May it please
That he be led this way?

ALF.

Presumest so far ?
Why, caitiff, know you not 'tis not our wont
That we should mate with strangers? Go, sirrah,
It is too early for a morning call.

CARLOS.

He's most importunate, my friends, and said
His business waited not on ceremony,
But craved an instant audience.

ALF.

Show him in :
We'd see this forward stranger, and perchance
Read him a lesson.

[WALTER enters, muffled in a large cloak.]

What? a monk, by Jove—

A holy, seedy father, fresh from matins,
To shrive each sin-soiled soul. What say you, friends?
A bumper to this powerful man of prayer—
This pious reptile—this low worm, called man,
Who, with a most insinuating leer,
And hands thus on his heart, gives unctioned blessing,
As from the depths of his most shallow heart
He suspirates a sigh. God wot, 'tis good ;
Yet, I'll be sworn, my friends, this holy man,
This rosary-mumbling fool, has ventured hither
To lecture, and perchance pervert our faith
In all of life or earth that's worth possessing.
But come and open your artillery ;—
Denounce as heretics our rover hearts,
And say at once, without one ruesome wince,
Thou hast our chartered mittimus from Heaven.

ALL

Bravo, our royal Alf,—bravo, ha! ha!

I

ALF.

Now, we would hear thee ;—therefore make all speed—
Our ears are itching—so proceed, proceed.

[WALTER *throws off the cloak, and is recognised.*]

ALL

Walter ?

WALTER.

Have done, egregious fools : give o'er,
Lest Heaven should take ye at your daring words,
And smite ye in His wrath.

ALF.

Well, Walter, hear :—

We do not mean to list your exhortation—
Another time for that ;—if there be aught
Of grave import, out with it, man, at once—
There is no need of tortuous ahs to reach
The ready ear of Pleasure.

WALTER.

True, my friends ;
But what can reach those hearts which Pleasure binds
With adamant chains—what wake the soul
That's drugged with Lethe's atheistic cup,
And has no aspirations for a life
Of rapturous glory far beyond the spheres ?
Despise the holy acts of pious men,
And scout at prayer, and laugh at ghastly Death,
And reel along the flowery paths of life

With heedless steps, and Pleasure for your mate ;—
Yet, ends all as a vision of the night,
And leaves the soul, when most in need of help,
A helpless, naked, and bewildered thing.
Has God no other work for man than prayer?
Ah, yes ;—but this for man is work for hell,
To which ye now are posting with all speed—
Without one thought of that eternity
Which stares upon you with a judge's eye—
Stern, calm, inflexible, and, as Heaven, just.
Look to your lives,—what is your hope in God?
Sneer not—the stoutest heart that hears me now
And laughs at a hereafter, when cold Death,
As an unkindly visitor, appears,
Will prove the veriest fool that ever breathed,
And, in his agony of fears to come,
Knocked loud at Heaven's door. He who had courage,
In his brief hour, to look and laugh at Heaven,
Is gone—his soul has reached its peaceful rest,
Till the ages waken up.

ALL

Who, Oran?

WALTER.

Your eager hearts anticipate my words.
Oran is dead !—but, ah ! his soul is hence :
Freed now from earth's delusive doubts, it soars
Among Love's ransomed myriads in the skies,
And wears a crown of glory.

HARRY.

We've been fools,
And now 'tis time to strike for Heaven and Hope.

ALF.

Oran is dead,—his spirit gone to God—
That God he sneered at, laughed at, called a myth?
I'll think of that.

WALTER.

Think of it, Alf., and friends;
For, to me Oran's last words were, Forewarn
My friends, and may the Heaven they loudly scorn
In mercy reach their hearts as He's mine,
And bring them home at last.

ALF.

Well, well, my friends,
It comes to this, that either Oran's fooled—
Or now enjoys the mysteries of love
Undreamed of on our earth—or we are fools,—
Thus playing on an awful precipice,
Unmindful and unthoughtful of beyond
That death-gloom veil suspended o'er our graves.

WALTER.

Ponder with earnest hearts this theme sublime—
The noblest study for immortal man—
The weal or woe of spirits after death,
And which shall be our sphere. Oran is gone,

And left us sorrowing, but, from his bier,
A voice is heard, and while we shed the tear
O'er Friendship's grave, may hopes supernal rise,
And, as a star of bliss, lead on beyond the skies.

SCENE SIXTH.

AFTERNOON—SEA-SHORE—HELEN ALONE.

HELEN.

How joyously old Ocean lifts his head,
Tipt with the glory of the setting sun,
That hurries to the West ! The Day has run
His race of pain and pleasure, and the Night
Will soon be here with melancholy eye,
To list the plaintive murmurs of those hearts
Reft of their faith and hope. Here love I much
To wander idly, and indulge in thoughts
That lead me upward, onward, out of time,
And, lost in the infinity of bliss,
Hold high communion with another world,
The world of the future—that dear home,
The hope, the solace, and the pride of all,
Whose lot is sorrow in their pilgrimage
Through weary time up to eternity.
Now sinks the Sun deep in the western wave,
Amid a flash of purple, and the Sea,
Still as the step of Death, erects his front
To catch the fading splendour of the king,
Ere darkness veils his awful crown of fire

That beautifies the earth. Lo! Twilight steals
Athwart the bosom of the tranquil deep,
As if a spirit charged with welcome news
To some lone, sorrowed soul. Old Ocean sleeps,
Yet, ah! how terrible, e'en in repose,
The giant seems! Who knows, when he awakes,
But fury will the work of death begin,
And make most hideous what is now so fair?
A gentle murmuring falls upon my ears,
Soft and liquid as the Æolian harp,
When sportive zephyrs dance upon its strings,
As if the Nereides in Neptune's halls
Held royal festival, and with their songs
Lulled the mad Ocean into calm repose:—
There all is joyousness and sprightly mirth,
If fable stories carry aught of truth;—
The future holds no terror o'er their heads;
But, happy in the present, they await
The mighty monarch of the coral caves,
Whose smile is, as the blushing smile of Morn,
Fraught with unutterable joy to all.

But why waits Walter? He will soon be here,
And with his beamy smile of untold love
Make me so happy: O come, idler, come.
As lonely as a hermit by the sea
Is Helen's heart without thee. Walter, come,
And chase away this anxious, unknown fear
That eats into my soul, as worm on flowers
That withers up the beauty of their prime.

[WALTER *appears*.

Ha, here he comes:—but what! his brow is dark,
And wrapped in sorrow, his eyes seek the ground;
He halts, he looks around, now looks to heaven,
And on that face is stamped a world of woe,
Too terrible for speech. My heart is up,
In awful terror of some coming ill—
Some dread catastrophe unchronicled;
He must speak first—I dare not trust my breath,
Lest fear should fetter speech. [WALTER *approaching*.

WALTER.

My Helen here,
As usual in communion with her soul,
And Ocean, emblem of eternity.
See how the Sun is sinking in the West,
And what a glory blazons round his couch.
He sinks as hero on his shield of fame,
When victory pierces his fast closing ears,
Then welcomes gloom; or, as the soul that goes
Into the future, and can look to Heaven,
And with submission say, “Thy will be done.”
I cannot track the weary Sun to rest,
When twilight hovers on the mountain tops,
But death is ever present, and the thought
Of dissolution and the gloomy grave
Will creep into my soul and darken all.
But Morn, with smile of God upon her lip,
Brings hope and immortality to man,
And cheers the saddest soul; all—all is change.
The joy that laps our souls to-day, may turn

To-morrow to our ruin, and the friend
On whom we reckoned joy for years to come,
May be snatched hence, and leave us desolate
And lonely as the wailing of the sea,
When waves rush up against the sedgy rock,
And in their fury perish.

HELEN.

You speak so strange,
My Walter, I can scarcely trust my tongue
To syllable my fears, and ask what cloud
Of rayless sorrow has o'ertaken thee.

WALTER.

'Twill soon pass over, Helen:—I have seen
The strangest scene; yet, Oh, God is kind,
And sends us blessings, oft without our asking—
Oft when we should be beggars. He sends us Night,
With pale-eyed Moon and Stars—those lamps of love,
Hung out in yonder sky to guide our steps,
And warm Devotion's fervour in our souls.
He sends us Day, with his unnumbered joys,
And Seasons ever roll in harmony;
He gives us souls on which our souls to lean,
And friendship—bud of love and paradise;—
Yet our unthankful hearts rebel, and spurn
His gracious gifts, when we should kneel and pray.

HELEN.

To what does all this tend?—my heart forebodes
Some evil story. Walter, plainly speak:

Suspense is worse to bear than naked truth,
Though it should blast the dearest hopes of life.
I know there is a sorrow on your heart ;
Oh, mould it into words, and let me know
The worst I have to fear !

WALTER.

Oran is dead :
And Emma closed his eyes in his long sleep.

HELEN.

Oran is dead, and Emma closed his eyes ?
What—what is this that dawns upon my soul,
Faintly as morning in the curtained east ?
Speakest thou truly, Walter ?

WALTER.

Helen, dead !
And sleeps the long, dull sleep of sullen death,
Freed from his toils and fears ! It may seem strange,
So lately was he in the flush of health—
So joyous at his liberty in God ;
Before him stretched a long and varied life
Of usefulness for Truth—that, too, is gone ;
And who knows but 'tis best ? Yes, even so.
I gazed upon his calm, cold brow, ere I
Came hither to you.

HELEN.

Oh, peace to his soul !

And now let loose from all of earthly pain,
Be his the immortality of heaven.

WALTER.

Amen;—and may we leave as much to love
And sympathise with when we quit this scene.

HELEN.

A chequered lot was his. Death parts us now,
And all too soon, since I had learned his worth.
He's gone! but who can trace the stream of life
To where 'tis lost—to all of mortal ken—
In shoreless ocean of eternity?
How died he? Did he go into the gloom,
Strong in his faith that promised light would come,
And make a palace of the darksome grave?

WALTER.

He died in peace—his faith was strong in God,
And, light of heart, he went into the gloom,
And his last song of triumph echoed back—
Another trophy of Redeeming Love.

HELEN.

God's ways are wondrous—here we walk in Night,
With pale Fear at our heels. We often doubt
The smile of Heaven, and in despondency
Clutch at a prop that fails us in our need,
And staggers our built faith in arm of flesh;—
When clouds of sorrow darken on our souls,

And pall the future with the lurid tints
Of Disappointment,—then, as Eve's lone star
Emerging from a cloud, the love of God
Is felt within our bosoms, and our souls,
Strengthened at Heaven's wells, go forth in power,
And yet with childlike trust. The sceptic laughs
And sneers at our futurity ;—poor soul,
He yet may learn, as Oran, how to love
And cherish that without which we are lost,
And are no better than the worms of earth,
Which we may tread on, and they are no more.

WALTER.

The future of our being robed in light,
And dowered with joy exhaustless as the heavens,
Has little charms to wean those earth-prone souls
From sensual pleasures and the dreams of time ;
To be, is to enjoy the wine of life—
To stretch their canvas to the flattering winds,
And sail adown the stream with careless song,
Regardless of the awful gulf of woe
That's yawning for them ; yet they hurry on
Until the Maelström's maddening laugh
Rings in their ears, and with a furious joy
Toys with them as a maniac—then they sink,
And Earth forgets them as they ne'er had been.

As I left Emma with the dead, I went
And sought Oran's companions—them I found
As harpies making Night most terrible
With wine, and song, and raillery at Heaven.

I broke the news, and pressed them to take note,
That he who once could boast as loud as they,
Renounced for ever the accursed creed
That gave no hope of immortality,
But endless misery and black despair.
I told them Oran died in faith—had gone
Into the great unknown without a fear,
And that his soul was safely lodged in glory.
Some laughed derisively, and said that Oran
Had struck his colours in the gloomy hour,
And feared the gape of hell ;—others were mute,
Their eyes uneasy, and with blanched cheeks,
Said they would think of it. I left them then,
But not without some little hope, that yet
The darkness which enshrouds their drowsy souls
Will be dispelled when dawns the truth of Heaven,
And drives the sceptic thoughts down to the depths
Of hell, from whence they sprung.

HELEN.

Be it so, Walter,
And for the issue let us trust in God—
He knows what's best and how our good to give.
Thou saidst that Emma was with Oran, how?
How came she there in such a solemn hour?
All seems so strange I know not what to think!

WALTER.

'Tis strange, I grant, my Helen, yet so it was.
As Oran's room I entered, all was still

As is the churchyard at the hour of twelve
When the young Day is born ;—the light was faint,
And glimmering to its socket—a fear I felt
Creep to my heart—I dreaded, yet I hoped ;
To break the fetters of suspense, I stole
Close to his couch, and tried in vain to speak ;
For there, Oh God, a female form I saw,
Firm in the arms of Death. Speechless I stood,
As if a thunder-bolt had struck me dumb,
And fixed me to that spot. A low, faint sob—
The distant murmur of a broken heart,
The dying echo of a fallen spirit
That had lost heaven—startled me, and woke
The latent sympathies of fear,—then rose
That phantom form from the embrace of Death,
And sighed, Lost, lost—to Emma ever lost !
The truth sprung up, And, Oh, had they thus met
Their errors to forgive and be forgiven,
E'en on the threshold of eternity ?
That scene can never pass—I see it now :
Emma with locks dishevelled, absent air,
And wild words on her tongue ; she wrung her hands,
And lifting up her eyes, that swam in tears,
Said, that she did not do the cursed deed—
That some fell spirit came and stole her Oran,
And he would ne'er return.

HELEN.

Poor bruised heart,
We cannot but have sympathy with such

As Emma in their grief; yet, who can tell,
Save the Omniscient One, in that dark hour,
What interchanges of confiding trust
Would pass from either heart? The clouded past,
In one wild rush of feeling, swept away,
And in a transport of ecstatic joy,
Would Oran seek the skies.

WALTER.

There rests his soul,
While Emma, wandering by the shore of Time,
Longs to be done with life and pass the flood,
And meet again with Oran.

HELEN.

God has work
She yet must finish ere He sets her free,
And crowns her with the diadem of love:
But tell me, Walter, how came Emma there
Unknown to Oran?

WALTER.

When they had parted,
Each thought 'twould be for ever: Oran lived
A life of sorrow and destructive thought—
At enmity with Heaven and with man.
Emma went from him, and from that sad hour
Strove to make peace with God; but in her prayers
Would Oran come, and then she thought of earth,
And on the time when happy, first-blown love

Welled in each other's heart. News reached her ears
That Oran, reckless of a future doom,
Embraced the sceptic's creed, and madly plunged
Into the vortex of ensnaring vice.
She wept in solitude, and prayed, and cried
That God would yet have mercy. Soon she heard
His earthly lamp burned dimly—she arose,
And strong in unquenched love of other years,
She came and pled with strangers to attend
And nurse his every want. 'Twas granted soon—
She tended him, she heard him lisp her name
So fondly, that the past—their early love—
Their castle-building on the base of Hope,
Stood full before her, that her heart gave way,
And told the truth in sobs. Oran, surprised,
First questioned, then the grand reality
Came full upon his heart—he blessed her there,
And died with smiles and Emma on his lips.

HELEN.

Oh, 'tis most strange, yet who so blind as doubt
That God was there in mercy—that His hand
Had led them upward to His gracious throne;
And, all their sorrow and their trials o'er,
Pastured their souls with love?

WALTER.

True, my Helen.
God met them in the gloom, and changed their grief
Into the light of love. Emma is left

To weep and mourn the errors of the past—
That well-stored treasure-house of vain regrets ;
But to the future looks she now with hope,
And Faith gives her content. We all have strayed ;
But not for man to judge another's wrong,
And reprobate the erring soul, while he
May be more guilty in the eyes of Heaven.
Yet man is ever ready to accuse
Where most he should give sympathy, and bind
The bleeding soul with love's most holy care,
And lead it back to God. We fool ourselves,
And madly think that Heaven may not detect
The guilty heart beneath the dark disguise.
Hypocrisy's abroad—his slimy trail,
And withering breath, as poison, sap
The strength of Virtue, and convert her smile
And joyous laugh into a settled gloom—
That, dark as is the heart of hate, shuts out
The light of our soul's immortality.

But Twilight deepens—Night is on the hills,
We will retrace our steps.

HELEN.

Walter, the Moon
Is up, and her attendant Stars are out,
And Ocean still as is the zephyr's breath,
Awaits their loving kiss. Oh ! what a scene
To stir the deepest pools within our souls,
And draw us up to heaven !

WALTER.

"Tis beautiful,
And rims our souls with thoughts of the Infinite,
That reach beyond the boundaries of Time
And spy the spiritland: there all is fair—
There one continuous day rolls ever on—
One sunny summer that can never sear,
And all crowned with the wondrous love of God.
There rest the hopes of pilgrims of the earth.
May ours rest there too; that when life is run,
We may go forth in joy to swell the throng
That long to welcome in that bridal Morn—
The never-ending jubilee of Love.

The Forester's Tale.

EVENING—THE FORESTER'S COTTAGE—RALPH, THE FORESTER—
LONDELL, A TRAVELLER.

LONDELL.

AN awful night, friend Ralph, to be abroad,
Unhoused, unsheltered on these dreary moors,—
When Night comes down, and neither moon nor star
Beams forth to cheer the lonely solitude;—
But shrouded in a gloom, vast, dense, and deep,
The hapless wanderer, sick and faint of heart,
Lies down, perchance to die. Hark! how the storm
Increases in its strength.

RALPH.

A fearful night;
May God protect the houseless, and afford
The weary rest! I hear the young trees sigh,
As Boreas twists his sinewy hands among
Their tender boughs; and even the sturdy oak
Groans heavily, as gust on gust sweeps down
The mountain's rugged gorge:—the rain descends
Prone as a leaden shower upon the earth,
And all the rills boil furiously as seas,
As rushing headlong o'er their pebbly beds,
They rouse the sleeping streamlet of the glen,
Which, swollen with the influx of fevered blood,
O'erflows its banks, and ruin spreads around.

Oh, 'tis a fearful night, and my heart bodes
Some evil by the morrow.

LONDELL.

Night is crazed,
And, as a maniac, shrieks, as lightnings flash
In wrathful darts upon her clouded brow,
That make the darkness denser than before ;—
Earth trembles to her centre as the roar
Of the hoarse thunder rolls along the skies,
As if 'twere Heaven's artillery aroused
By the embattled seraph host of war,
Led forth 'gainst Lucifer and all the damned,
That redispute the gates of Paradise.
Are such storm-visits frequent with you, Ralph ?

RALPH.

Whew, no ;—once in a lifetime is enough.
Yet, I'll be bound Ralph is the only one,
In the whole country side, who now can tell
Of such another night. Well, let me see,
Ay—ay, 'tis fully sixty years ago,
For I was scarcely twenty years, and now
I'm eighty-four. *That* was an awful night,
And never, in the memory of man,
Had such a night foretold the general doom,
And wakened terror in the hearts of men.
The lightning bright and brighter flashed, until
We thought the world on fire ; and the wild growl
Of furious thunder deep and deeper rolled,

Till Earth shook 'neath our feet, and seemed to rock
In wild convulsions, as if graspt by Death,
And dreaded the approaching end of all.
Down came the rain, and deluged all our glen,
And drove us from our hearths to the cold moor,
Where, wet and weary, shivering in the dark,
We prayed for dawn of Morn. The Morning came,
And with her came the joyous song of birds,
And bright blue skies, and Nature smiled as if
No storm had rifled Earth. Low at our feet
The work of ruin met our anxious gaze :—
The glen was one wild foamy sea of wrath,
Which, in its maddened, plunging, boisterous course,
Had swept away our cots, and we were left
Wretched and homeless, hopeless in despair.
Wrapt in the thick folds of their anxious thoughts,
All silent stood and viewed the desolate scene—
Both young and old, with heavy heaving hearts
And wandering eyes—in grief too deep, and keen
For the refreshing luxury of tears.
As thus we stood, a wild and frantic scream
Was heard far o'er the moor! Afeared, all turned
With apprehensive hearts to whence they heard
That soul-bowed cry of woe :—'Twas soon explained—
A shepherd, on his way across the moor, .
Had found a youth stretched on the heath and—dead!
Belated on the moor, the storm came on,
And, shrouded in the dark, had lost his way—
All hope or succour cut off, he sank down—
And so had perished! But oh! what a death!

Untended and uncared for in the storm—
In desperation to sink down and feel
Death's cold hand round your heart! We bore him
hence,
And soon the lonely churchyard was his home.
We wrote no boastful epitaph for him,
But carved his fate upon the simple stone
That marks the stranger's grave:—'tis thus it runs—
"Whoe'er you be that stand by this lone grave,
Pause! here lies one of youthful, manly form.
One night, as thunder furiously did rave,
He perished on the moor amid the storm.
Unknown to all, by stranger hands laid here.
He rests in hope till Christ in love appear."
'Tis strange, none ever came to seek the lost;
And, haply, in a distant home some hearts
Would long for the lost wanderer's return,
But long and pray in vain.

LONDELL.

'Tis a sad tale.
And none e'er wandered hither after him?
Poor youth, he had been friendless, of a truth,
And found a grave with strangers. I fear his fate
Had been mine too on such a night as this,
Had not your hopeful light, that through the gloom
Glistened like Mercy's eyes amid her tears,
Led on my weary steps. My heart is full
With thoughts more powerful than the gush of words,
As I recall the horrors of the moor,

And now securely housed from all that gave
A fear to brave the storm-king in his wrath.

RALPH.

There is a Providence that guides our steps,
And watches o'er us in our every turn
O'er the rough path of life. He was with thee,
And Mercy spread her covering wings around
And gave thee kindly aid. On such a night!
Throughout the glen you would not find a door
Unhospitable to a stranger's knock!
That lone grave in the churchyard preaches still,
And none are inattentive to the voice
That teaches kindness to the weary-worn.

LONDELL.

Heaven bless you all! The peasants in this glen
Could make the fur-robed magnates feel the blush
Of shame, and dwarf them in the acts of love.
The city is so selfish, none have time
To list the tale of misery; on they push,
Fevered to madness in pursuit of gold.
Oh, how it sickens the lone soul to watch
The ceaseless tide of over-anxious hearts
Roll on from Morn till Eve, without one act
Of kindness to the wretched, or one word
Of sympathy to him who's bent with grief!
But in the country, as one family,
In sunshine or in shade, in joy or grief,
Each has a fellow-feeling for a brother,

And sympathy is nourished and is felt.
Well sung the poet in his truthful line,
"God made the country, but man made the town;"
Then back return to Nature and to God,
And warm our hearts with love.

RALPH.

I could not live
In your great cities, shut out from the green
Of fields and trees, and from the song of birds.
The whizzing wheels of trade—the endless roar
Of busy hearts along your busy streets—
The keen, suspicious look—the cold, hard heart,
Which ne'er has owned the kindly touch of love,
Would make me wretched, and I'd pine away
Like prisoned bird that chirps a sorrowing song,
And longs for the wild wood and ether blue,
And gentle mountain rill. Here have I lived
From childhood, and each year has strengthened love
For Nature and has drawn me nearer God.
But I must soon leave all I love so much,
The hills, the mountains, and my native glen,
And go hence to my fathers. Gladly I'd go,
Had I the hope that others too would rise,
Sons worthy of their sires. That hope is dashed.
To other climes our sons are forced to roam,
And pleasure haunts the fields they love become,
And strangers now possess their fathers' home.

LONDELL.

'Tis a world of change ; man, and whate'er he owns,
Change with the ever-flowing tide of Time.
But on the other side of that dark moor,
I noted well an old and antique ruin
Bowered in a thick, deep wood. You know the place?

RALPH.

Yes, yes, 'tis Castle Beaufort, an old hall,
Seared with Time's busy fingers. 'Tis a long time
Since Beaufort's Lord trod through his fathers' halls.
There's a long story linked with that grey pile :
Wouldst hear an old man's tale?

LONDELL.

Gladly I'd hear
Aught of that place, for I was deeply moved
To mark that noble edifice in ruins,
And longed to know its story.

RALPH.

Castle Beaufort
Had seen a long line of the noble Bruces—
'Tis of the last I'd speak. The story came
From father, and old grandsire had waited
Upon Lord William and young Harold Bruce.
But, since that time the glen has changed hands ;
Yet sacred is the memory of Bruce,
And Castle Beaufort still a hallowed spot.
But to my story. Beaufort's heir was Harold,

A noble youth, of tall and beauteous form,
Well dowered with grace to wake in Beauty's heart
The soft and warbling music of a love
As pure and lasting as that holy flame
Which burns eternal in an angel's soul.
And he had but one sister—Emeline—
A little, modest, gentle flower of love ;
Oh ! beautiful was she, as is the rose
When jewelled with the silvery bells of dew,
Lit up with glory of the morning sun :—
And good as beautiful ; she loved to come
And hold sweet talk with all the aged here ;
And always had a loving word for those
Whom sorrow had assailed, and cheered their souls
With all the kindly offices of love.
Well might Lord William feel a glow of pride
As on these two he gazed with fondling eyes,
And look into the future with a hope
That gave rich promise of increase of love.
But not of these alone was his heart proud :—
The blood of Royalty flowed in his veins,
Pure from the hero, Bruce, of Bannockburn ;
And dark, grim-visaged Earls, framed in gold,
Adorned the lofty oaken, tapestried halls,
And told the glory of their ancient house.
But Harold boasted not of royal blood,
Nor deemed the low plebeian heart denied
The keener glow of love—the power of truth,
As if these powerful soul-emotions were
Prerogated to him that wore the crown,

Or prided in the glittering star of state.
His heart went joyous forth in acts of love,
And was a brother to the lowest hind
That tilled his father's land ; and Emeline
Looked up to Harold with confiding trust,
And learned of him to sympathise with those
Whose lot was toil, and, with the sweaty brow,
To trudge through life. But, in an evil hour,
The Fates conspired 'gainst Castle Beaufort, and
A cloud of sorrow hung above its towers,
Portending ruin to the stately hall.
The hall was lit—the sumptuous feast was spread—
And noble guests, in gorgeous state, were there :—
Old Earls and fair daughters, and mothers once
As beautiful, though Time had silvered hair,
That once outvied the raven's plume, or shone
Rich as a golden sunset in the West ;
But there was one more beautiful than all
That galaxy of Beauties—queenly tall,
And wondrous fair, as if she had been born
To sway the sceptre of imperial Love,
And, receive the homage of each beating heart,
That leapt forth wildly at her beamy glance.
'Twas she Lord William chose for Harold's bride,
And looked forth proudly to a Howard's arms
Inwoven with those of Bruce. The night sped on,
And music's charms and beauty made hearts light,
And Beaufort's Lord looked proudly on the scene—
But lovingly on Howard's stately Bertha,
And in his heart already called her daughter.

Alas! how vain are man's illusive hopes!
We risk our all upon the fatal die—
The numbers turn up, and—our all is gone.
The morning came, and all the royal guests
On fiery steeds, that snuffed the early breeze,
And gorgeously caparisoned, went forth
With many a joke and merry silvery laugh,
To unhood and fly their hawks; and, noblest far,
Was Harold, Beaufort's darling son and heir.
And fairest of the fair, was Howard's daughter,
Who rode majestic as the queen of gods.
But there were envious eyes and whispered words—
For hearts were busy with the future's secrets—
And Harold's name with Bertha's oft was linked,—
And each most trivial act of gallantry
Was talked of as the impulse of his love.
The sport was o'er, and all the royal guests
Had left old Castle Beaufort, ere the night
With lengthening shadows rested on the hills.
And now, Lord William, with a cautious move,
Touches on Howard's daughter. How fair and good,
How queenlike, and how worthy of a lord
Whose house could boast a long array of Earls—
The noblest and the bravest of the land!
Harold's heart quaked with a mysterious fear:
He dreaded lest his father should propose
The haughty Howard as affianced bride,
And his own soul already centred in
The holy love of Leila;—fears were just:
Harold was importuned to win a bride,

And sue for Howard's Bertha. He humbly heard
His father to the end ; then merely said,—
A Bruce could never give his hand away,
While he must keep his heart ;—she he would wed,
Must sit supreme deep in his bosom's core,
And only yield her precedence to God.
He *did* admire the noble Bertha, but
He felt no warmth of love. Lord William gazed
As one bewildered, on his son's dark brow,
Then proudly stood erect with flashing eye,
And Fury's whirlwind on his trembling lips,
And in a quivering voice said, Harold, hear,
Your father hath decreed that Howard's daughter
Shall wear the ducal coronet of Bruce,
And 'tis for thee to hear and to obey.
Harold, to these stern, cruel words, replied :
In all else I'll obey—my father's word
Has ever been my law—my heart ne'er felt
Nor owned one harsh, one unkind thought for thee ;
And I have ever strove, from earliest years,
To imitate thy love—thy noble deeds—
And walk among our people as a father ;
And I have cherished in my heart that love
Of independence, heirloom of the Bruce,
Which spurns to bend the knee, and bow the head,
Should not the full heart also bow in love :—
Then, brand me not degenerate and vile,
Unhappy son of such heroic sires,
Whose bright ensamples oft have nerved my arm
To deeds of valour, and have warmed my heart

To acts of love, when with indignant soul
I've hurled the proud Oppressor's wrong aside,
And sheltered the oppressed. Now, must I bow
All humbly, and fulfil this stern decree,
That seals me recreant and hypocrite?
Oh, God forbid! it cannot, must not be,
Lest Harold should prove himself a cursed thing,
Unworthy of his sires. Be what the cost,
My soul shall wander forth in quest of love,
Unfettered and alone. Incensed the more
By Harold's bold and stern reply, he thus,
Who counsels aught unworthy of a Bruce?
Not one of all the Earls of our house,
But would have smiled to see a Howard wear
The Bruce's diadem. My heart has fixed
That Howard's Bertha shall become your bride,
And lordly Beaufort's queen. Prepare, we go
To Ruthven Hall to-morrow, and there conclude
This treaty of the Howard and the Bruce.
Never! cried Harold, as with haughty look
He braved his father's threat. The Bruce's name,
His lands, his titles, and his pride of birth,
Shall be forsworn ere I to Leila prove
The base-born wretch that can forget his vow,
And quench the star of love in woman's soul.
Aghast Lord William eyed his haughty son,
Half pity, half resolve was in his eye,
And in his heart a war:—his aged form
Bowed with the wild commotion of his soul,
As he to Harold,—Who is Leila, who?

Harold, all tenderness, thus made reply,—
A gentle maiden, and most beautiful,
A moss-rose on a bank of violets
Is not more fair than she ;—and, with a heart
Whose every throb is but a pulse of love,
She boasts not in the gangrene of a name,
But in the true nobility of Nature.
To such my soul has been allied—my love
Is wed to Leila, the fair gipsy queen.
Accursed of Bruce—a father's heart-broken curse
Scath that foul soul, and make thee reprobate ;
Hence from your fathers' halls, abandoned heir,
Go, with your Leila—with your gipsy queen.
The wanderer's curse be thine o'er God's broad earth,—
Denied the luxury of an honoured home,
Or e'en the warm love of a fatherland.
Down to his fathers' graves, disgraced and lone,
Let Beaufort come, ere he should see the Bruce
Wed with the abject and the cursed of earth ;
Hence—hence, your Leila waits, her syren love,
With bands of iron, has fettered to her heart
The last of Bruce,—the last of Beaufort's heirs.
So let it be ere Beaufort's halls should own
As Lady, Leila of the wandering tribe.
Stung with his father's fiery, barb'd words,
Harold fled from his home—ne'er to return.
Lord William's heart was crushed, and nevermore
A smile lit up those wandering, dreamy eyes,
That roamed in vacancy ; and he would list,
As if his heart yearned for the exiled one,

And longed to clasp the wanderer to his heart.
Sorrow was ever in that hall, and soon
Lord William slept in peace. Oh, lonely now
Was Emeline, that sweet and lovely maid;
Yet, strong in love, she saw her father laid
Within the old sarcophagus of Bruce,
Where lords and ladies of their noble house
Were gathered to their fathers. Then she took
A long, a loving, and a last farewell
Of Castle Beaufort; and each peasant's heart
Remembers still the Lady Emeline,
Who passed away, and ne'er returned again
To youth's bright home of love. Years flew apace,
And the old honoured hall became a ruin—
A sad memorial of a wasted house.

LONDELL.

But what became of Harold and his Leila?

RALPH.

Little is known:—He and Leila went
O'er sea to Italy, that sunny clime,
And home of love and song; there Leila died
Ere she became a mother, and in grief
Young Harold sought the shores of Spain, and there
Had perished in the wars.

LONDELL.

Strange—strange indeed;
'Tis a sad story, and the heart is touched

With sympathy for those unhappy ones ;
Though severed far in life—in graves unknown—
May they awaken to a lasting joy,
Each soul reknit in heaven !

RALPH.

So pray we all.
But now for rest—the storm has settled down ;
Good night, my friend, good night, and happy dreams
Be yours until the morrow.

To My Lyre.

ALL hail, my Lyre! thou more than earthly friend,
Thy rough wild notes have ever welcome rung;
And now, when cherished hopes untimely end,
Thee still I have, and therefore have I strung
Thy chords again. Oh, breathe one soothing wail!—
'Tis thine to cheer the soul when other aids shall fail.

How oft, in the deep silent noon of night,
When mortals sip the luscious cup of rest,
Thy diapasons, fraught with sweet delight,
Have calmed the fever of my burning breast!
'Tis then my soul lists to each wildering strain,
And in a flood of bliss forgets its earthly pain.

In Sorrow's darkest hour thou'st raised my heart
Above the thrall that shades this mundane life;
Thy strains a witchery can well impart
To soothe the soul amid the direst strife
Of this cold world. Yes, Music, thou canst give
A pleasure and a joy for which 'tis life to live.

But ah! my Lyre, for thee no praise awaits:
Thy numbers may not charm the polished ear;
Yet thou art simple, and if such elates
But one lone bosom, I have naught to fear.
Some, there may be, will listen to thy notes,
And what though they be found among our rural cots!

Fame's wreaths I covet not, nor will I dare
Build up the rhyme with academic lore;
To gain those sorrowed hearts where lurketh Care,
And cheer them with glad melodies of yore:—
Such be my aim—and make them sweetly smile
Around the happy hearth, with Grief defied the while!

Awake! my Lyre, and sound the high emprise
That seeks to bind mankind into one whole;
Be thine that happiness to realise,
Which will spring up, when once there's soul with soul
Linked in one brotherhood—be thine to sing
That jubilee of Love, which peace to earth shall bring.

Oh, touch man's callous heart with love for man,
Let Sympathy flow from thy chords amain;
And as the whole of mankind thou may'st scan,
Let Music's raptures snap the galling chain
That bars the poor from forth the pillared dome,
Into those wretched huts so oft miscalled a home.

Into those hearts where Poverty still reigns,
Let all thine influences now diffuse—
Soothe their sad, drooping souls—assuage their pains,
And sing of Hope; for Hope is heavenly news
To those whose all is in the world above:
Fulfil thy mission thus, and thou'lt awaken love.

To a Lark.

CAROLLING merrily on the wing,
Blythe herald of the leafy Spring ;
Oh ! why so early soar on high
Far in the orient, azure sky ?

With dewy breast, why take your flight
Ere Morn dispels the gloom of Night,
And wake the warblers of the grove
With that melodious song of love ?

Why shun the brake, the woody shade,
The hoary thorn and verdant glade ;
Where linnet and the blackbird sing
The cheerful symphonies of Spring ?

Thou lov'st to seek the fleecy cloud,
While thee, the downy vapours shroud ;
Thy song I hear, but gaze in vain
For thee o'er the cerulean plain.

At early dawn I love to hear
Thy notes descend so rich and clear,
As music of seraphic band,
Within the unseen spirit-land.

Thou through the ether fields dost roam,
But gain'st at Eve thy lowly home;
So may I ever upward soar,
And reach at length the wished-for shore.

Cherub of freedom, soar away,
And pipe thy sweetest, merriest lay;
With thee I'll rise—with thee I'll raise
My matin song of love and praise.

To Disappointment.

OH! who can bide fell Disappointment's sting,
That chills the heart and dims the lustrous eye,
When all our hopes as Morning's beams take wing,
And leave us in our sorrow but to sigh?

'Tis hard, when after sleepless nights of toil,
To hear the laugh and mark the eye's disdain
That blight our hopes—our bleeding hearts recoil,
And seek the shades of Solitude in vain.

Grim is thy smile, Oh Disappointment dire!
Hoarse is thy voice, unmusical, unkind;
It sears the heart, as Heaven's vivid fire
The gnarled oak that braves the boisterous wind,

The pallid cheek, the hectic flush, that tells
All is not right within that breast, once calm :
Ah, no ! for there a sad commotion swells,
That scorns the power of each medicinal balm.

How oft our schemes of future fame and joys,
Heedless we raise another Babel high !
Be He, who wrote upon the wall, destroys
Our mad attempt to reach the vaulted sky.

Quick beats the heart, and bright the eyes do glow,
When on us shines a transient gleam of praise ;
But ah ! the soul sinks with the hollow show
Of earth, Eternity will soon erase.

Too many learn—but learn the truth too late—
The fairest, richest flowers of earth soon die,
And all the smiles the joys of earth create,
But gender in our bosoms Sorrow's sigh :

Yet, as the star that ushers in the Morn,
And casts aside the sombre pall of Night ;
So Faith buoys up, and heals the bosom torn
By Disappointment's transitory blight.

On the Death of an Early Friend.

A STILLY silence reigns around,
Both peer and peasant lie at rest—
Decay on all alike imprest—
They sleep in Death's embrace profound.

Death stalks abroad—to all how near!
He enters lordly hall and cot,
And bears away to this lone spot
Our friends, whom still we hold so dear.

Companion of my early years,
Green grows the sod above thy head;
Alas! thou'rt numbered with the dead,
Deaf to my sobs—blind to my tears.

And all that now remains of thee
Are the mementoes of the past;
But they a sickly pallor cast
O'er all that once brought joy to me.

No more we'll seek the greenwood wild,
Nor daisied mead, nor upland lawn,
Nor list the lark at morning's dawn—
Gone are the joys that once beguiled.

Thou'rt gone—I think I see thee still,
And hear again thy dulcet voice,
That made my weary heart rejoice,
And gently swayed a wayward will.

Alone I seek the shady nook,
Where we were wont at noon to stray,
And sheltered from the sun's bright ray,
We studied Nature's ample book.

Spring will again her buds display,
The hawthorn's hoary blossoms shine,
And amorous ivy oaks entwine;
But in thy absence, what are they?

Yet soon will pass these days of pain,
And life's eternal morn arise,
To knit the too long severed ties,
When happy we will meet again.

A Smile.

WHAT is a smile—canst thou not tell?

Hast thou not felt the tell-tale sigh
Steal softly from its secret cell,
When sparkled bright the beauteous eye?

The heart, responsive to its call,
Makes Fancy longing, lingering stay,
To muse upon the loved ones all,
Whose smiles have cheered life's gloomy day.

A mother's smile dries up the tear
Of Disappointment; her sweet voice
So gently weans the heart from fear,
And makes it even to rejoice.

A sister's smile the heart inspires,
And binds by its electric spell;
It cherisheth Love's pure desires,
On which we fondly love to dwell.

But there's a smile that cheers the heart,
And kindles Hope's aspiring flame;
Its ever-radiant beams impart
A bliss we feel but cannot name.

It sootheth drooping, moody Care,
And points to future bliss in store ;
Relumes the eye of wan Despair,
And medicates the bleeding core.

It speaks of happy hours gone past,
Those hours to Memory ever dear ;
Recalls the sweets we wished to last,
And makes one summer all the year.

It is the beaming smile of Love
That, star-like, gems the fair one's eyes,—
The meek expression of the dove
That 'neath the silken lashes lies.

To Winter.

THE Summer's blythesome days are gone,
We hear no more the blackbird's lay,
Nor sprightly lark at ope of day,
Thrill in the clouds with mellow tone.

Now, Winter, chilly, grim, and hoar,
Speeds reckless o'er his bleak domain,
And revels in snow, sleet, and rain,
While winds unbridled madly roar.

The sombre woods, now seared and bare,
 Bewail the Winter's ruthless power ;
 Their naked boughs that erst did tower,
Droop with a melancholy air.

The daisied meads no more invite
 To roam and watch the blushing Morn,
 In her refulgent chariot borne,
Crush the all-powerful sway of Night.

Are there who say, that Winter wild
 Brings not a soul-enlivening balm,
 To cheer the heart and Care becalm,
As well as Nature's favourite child?

Lo, round the household's cheerful fire,
 The noisy wee things gather fast ;
 With riddles the long night is past,
And with those tales that never tire.

Yes, Winter, to the weary soul,
 Can lend a pleasure undefined,
 And tranquillise the burdened mind,
Even with his wild and stern control.

When in the lonely hours of night,
 I hear the mad winds bellow loud,
 As if they'd rend the leaden cloud,
To me their fury yields delight.

For Winter's hoarse and hollow voice
Far sweeter music is to me
Than all the charms of minstrelsy,
That make the raptured heart rejoice.

Come, Sire of storms! all hail to thee!
I love thy hoary, aged form,
And voice that thunders in the storm,
Far echoing o'er land and sea.

Stanzas.

'Tis sweet to roam in early dawn,
And hear the warblers blythely sing;
To pace, with pensive mind, the lawn,
And watch the modest daisies spring:
To mark the golden Sun arise,
In all his glory, pride, and power,
And gild the variegated dyes
Of flowerets in each wood and bower.

'Tis sweet, upon the distant hill,
To scan the landscape far and wide;
To hear the softly tinkling rill
Adown the rugged mountain glide;

And in some cool sequestered shade,
Beside a music-warbling stream,
Where nought can solitude invade—
'Tis sweet in summertime to dream.

But, sweeter far to me is Night,
When yon fair star-enamelled sky
Teems with its quenchless torches bright,
That captivate the Muser's eye :
And when the pale and modest Moon
Her lone nocturnal course pursues—
When reigneth Night's profoundest noon,
'Tis sweet in solitude to muse.

'Tis sweet to leave, at Eventide,
The busy city's wildering throng,
Where riot Luxury and Pride,
On cursed Oppression, Guilt, and Wrong,
And through old Nature's spacious hall
To revel, uncontrolled and free,
Where nought of Sorrow's pangs empall
With grief the spirit's buoyancy.

'Tis sweet, when servile toil is o'er,
When Night unbinds the clanking chain,
And man, aweary at the core,
In reverie forgets his pain.
Ah! then, what gleams of glory fill
His bounding bosom with delight,
When all around is deeply still,
In the sweet solitude of Night!

The Village Patriarch.

OUR village Sire is dead—

We miss him in the street,
And vainly seek the white, white head.

Alas! no more we'll greet
The hoary Patriarch, for he
Has passed into eternity.

Our widowed hearts deplore

The good old man's decease.
His earthly pilgrimage is o'er;
A life of love and peace
Was his, and, as the even star,
Its influence shone from afar.

Oh, happy was it, when

In guileless, childish glee,
We pulled his snowy locks, and then
Sat listful on his knee,
To hear his tales of olden time,
That whiled away our summer prime!

No more with us he'll stroll

By stream, o'er mead, through wood,
Nor our obstreperous mirth control,
With maxims wise and good.
Now, he is stretched upon his bier,
And blind to Sorrow's bitter tear.

No more we'll disagree
On who his staff should bear,
Nor hear him chide our repartee,
With mild paternal care.
Those happy, happy days are fled,
Since the old Patriarch is dead.

Then let us gather flowers
To deck his sacred tomb,
From those delightful sylvan bowers,
Where we were wont to roam.
With violet and pale primrose
Let's strew the place of his repose,—

And thither oft repair,
To kneel upon the sod,
And lift our souls, on wings of prayer,
To own the hand of God
In this, our Sire's decease, and crave
As ours, his life, his death, and grave.

A Lay of the Covenant.

I HAD a dream—a striking dream of Scotland's bloody
days,
When heathy hill and ferny glen re-echoed with the
praise
Of those who sung the pious psalm, and breathed the
fervent prayer
For Scotland—sadly sorrowing land—and Zion's martyrs
there.
That was a time of darkest deeds which records still can
tell,
How, for their Covenant and King, the Faithful fought
and fell;
How home and kindred they forsook, and on the
mountain sod
The scattered flock together met, and there they
worshipped God.

Methought, in spirit, I traversed the heathy moorland
wild,
It was a summer Sabbath morn—the sun serenely
smiled;
The early lark was on the wing, and sweetly sung its
lay,
As if to welcome back again the hallowed Sabbath-day.

I wandered on until I gained the passage of a wood—
The feathered choristers alone disturbed that solitude ;
I laid me down beneath the shade of cool refreshing
trees,
And, with enraptured soul, drank in the woodland
melodies.

But, from the bosom of the wood, there rose another
song,

'Twas a sweet, plaintive melody, and with it bore along
The burden of down-trodden souls that dared to be free,
And with unshackled minds to claim their birthright,
Liberty.

I knew the solemn sound that stole upon my listening
ear—

'Twas raised by those whom Sympathy still mourns with
pious tear—

They had been driven forth from home, but on the
moorland wild,

They were secure from tyrant hate, when God upon
them smiled.

I joined the Covenanting band ; and what a scene was
there!—

The old, the young, in that dun wood, were met for
praise and prayer ;

And such a sense of holy awe, was read in every eye—

That what I saw was such a scene as will not quickly
die.

I heard the preacher's solemn voice exhort to persevere ;
For God had promised them his aid, and He was ever near
To shield His people in the hour of Persecutor's hate,
And He His church would save and lead forth from her
desert state.

He spoke of Israel, when they were crushed by the
Tyrant's hand—

When they, by Babel's streams, bewailed o'er fallen
Judah's land ;

And how they cried unto the Might of Israel, with tears,
That once again He would them save, and hush the
captives' fears ;

Again for them His hand's outstretched—again He pity
shows,

And sympathises with their grief and all the darkened woes
Of bondage—years ran swiftly on—the captives' humbling
chain

Was severed, and in Palestine stood Israel again.

They trod again their native soil—each well-remembered
spot,

The Temple, and the Holy Hill, could never be forgot ;
In vain the nations round conspired to overturn their
might—

An unseen Hand still saved by day, and sheltered them
by night ;

And though tried Scotia's sons were now compelled to
worship God

Afar from home, in woods, and caves, and on the moun-
tain sod ;

Though forth his sword the Tyrant draws, and faggots
meet the gaze,
Yet faithful stand to Zion's King in these crime-crimsoned
days.

For perjured Scotland yet would wail o'er Heaven-
defying guilt,
And mourn o'er all her martyred sons, whose blood she
madly spilt;
Her Covenant again would rise above the faggot fires,
And be a monument of praise to all her Martyr Sires.
He cheered them with the prospect of the future which
he drew,
And they were cheered, because they felt that God would
make it true;
Again they sung the pious psalm, and breathed Faith's
earnest prayer,
And they were moved because they knew a present God
was there.

With pensive, meditative hearts they took their home-
ward way,
And fondly prayed that Scotland yet would have a
brighter day.
I marked them one by one pass by with calm and pious
mien,
But when I woke, methought it was no vision I had
seen.

Bannockburn.

WHAT stirring scenes upheave my soul,
As o'er famed Bannockburn I stray!
What scenes in solemn grandeur roll
Upon my view, as back that day
I call, when here, in war's array,
The pride of Scotland took their stand
With Bruce, whose banners did display:
"Scots, Victory, and Fatherland!"

Methinks the clash of arms I hear,
And chieftains' war-cries swelling high;
Methinks, the wounded's groans come near,
And there some brother, foeman lie,
Unheeded now, they're left to die,
As onward press each valiant band,
While rank to rank repeats the cry:
"Scots, Victory, and Fatherland!"

The struggle deepens on my sight,
The hosts of Edward charge again;
But, 'gainst them Scotland's right is might,
And all their efforts now are vain.
Lo! England's boast, athwart the plain,
Flee, routed, heedless of command,
While Caledonians pipe the strain:
"Bruce, Victory, and Fatherland!"

The scene is changed—the battle's roar
Is hushed, and cruel warfare fled;
And Evening drops her curtains o'er
The bloody field, and o'er the dead.
But the pale moonbeams dimly shed,
And show some soul-determined hand
Still grasp his sword, and foes defied
With "Victory, and Fatherland!"

Oh, Caledonia, how dear
Are all thy patriot sons to me!
Here o'er their graves I shed a tear,
And bless them that they made me free.
Oh, still for Liberty and thee,
Be there a Bruce and patriot band,
To vindicate thy rights and be
The bulwark of their Fatherland!

To an Oak.

OLD Monarch of the forest glade,
Thy brow is furrowed o'er with years;
Thy lofty looks, thy beauties fade—
Naught of thy youthful prime appears.
But shrivelled now as one who bears
With feeble strength the load of Time,
Thou'rt downward bent, while Winter sears,
With his chill breath, boughs that did climb
Up to the sunlit heavens in beauty most sublime.

Old Monarch, in life's balmy days,
When all was innocence and glee,
I loved to seek thy sheltering bays,
And dream in blissful reverie
Of what thou in thy prime didst see ;
And which historic page has told
How Britons struggled to be free,
And back the tide of serfdom rolled,
As Britons only could, for Freedom ever bold.

Though shrivelled now, and bowed with years,
And all thy youthful vigour fled,
Thy former stateliness appears
As a bright wreath around thy head
Time could not wither, though he sped
O'er all with sweeping, searing wing ;
Thy boughs, Old Monarch, still outspread,
Though feebly ; and, alas ! they hing
Like weeping wood-nymphs round the forest's aged King.

Thou, in the dingy wood, dost stand
Alone, as some prophetic seer ;
Thy hoary boughs to heaven expand,
And seem to warn of danger near.
Oh thou, to every Briton dear,
Be hallowed every time-kissed lock
Upon thy brow !—we will revere,
And shield thee from the woodman's stroke,
Should he e'er dare to touch old Briton's honoured Oak.

Spring.

OLD Winter now is gone,
And gentle Spring
Comes skipping blandly on
With her fairy ring;
And Nature lifts her drooping head again,
No longer furrowed o'er with Winter's biting pain.

All now begins to bloom,
And music's spell
Awakens from the tomb,
Of Spring to tell;
While choral pæans ring among the woods,
And make a paradise of Nature's solitudes.

I love old Winter hoar,
And his wild strife,
When deafening thunders roar,
With dangers rife;
For, there's a grandeur in his maddest glee,
In storms upon the land or hurricanes at sea.

But, more I love to hail
The blooming Spring,
Who comes o'er wood and vale
Her robe to fling,
And gladden Nature with her richest smile—
Whose witchery can heal the throes of Winter's guile.

Now, let me seek the lawn
At ope of day,
When darkness is withdrawn,
And sunbeams play,
So fairylike, upon the flowing stream,
And all invite to court the bliss of Reverie's dream.

Hail, gentle Spring, thou'rt come
Endowered with song,
And birds, no longer dumb,
The woods among,
Pour forth their richest, sweetest harmonies,
And thine own praises swell in their glad melodies.

The lark, thy herald, sings
Among the spheres,
While she, on daring wings,
Defying fears,
Mounts up high—higher on unwearied wing,
And trills with ecstasy her praises of the Spring.

Now, that old Winter's dead,
Come, let us hail
The Spring, and with her tread
The wood and vale;
No longer sorrow shall encloud our brow,
For Winter's wrath is o'er, and Spring is laughing now.

The Weary Heart.

My heart is weary!—would I could unbind
The fetters that engird my soul,
Or that I could one genial spirit find
My bosom's sorrow to control!
But not for me!—ah, not for me
Is such a boon in store!
Though I may strive, what can I see
But darkness still?—then let me be
An outcast evermore.

Ah! it is hard to struggle and to feel
Our every effort is but vain
To reach the wished-for goal, or to conceal
The work of sorrow and of pain!
That, through the long and weary day,
Preys wildly on the heart,
When all our day-dreams flee away
And leave us but the twilight's ray
To ease our bosom's smart.

'Tis hard, when all-absorbing Hope betrays
The sanguine visions of the mind,
Our cherished airy castles to erase,
With soul composed and heart resigned;

Ah! life is vain!—its sweetest smiles
Leave in the heart a sting;
And all its soft persuasive wiles,
Its pleasure, that too oft beguiles,
Soon—ah! how soon take wing!

And I have battled with an adverse fate,
That all along has bowed me down;
Those friends I had, their love is turned to hate,
And with them soul communion flown:
Alone, apart from all I stand,
My bosom rent with sighs;
I'll upward look till hopes expand
Into the bliss of that sweet land,
Where love wanes not nor dies.

How many wear a smile upon the lip,
While foul Deceit lurks in the breast!
Alas! such friends Affection's buds will nip,
And fill the bosom with unrest:
Oh! would I had some hermitage,
Which man had never trod;—
In that lone spot I would assuage
The bitterness of Sorrow's rage,
In closeness with my God!

Oh! weary heart, be quiet; wherefore leap
So wildly, wakening livid Fear?
Be strong, and boldly ever onward keep,
Despite whatever ills be near;

Though dark and lowering clouds impend,
With deadly horrors rife,
There's nought to fear—there is a Friend,
Who timely aid to thee will send,
And shield mid direst strife.

But still 'tis hard to wean the heart away
From those we've lost, yet still esteem;
Even when we feel their former love decay,
And vanish as the moon's pale beam.
The heart still fondly clings to those
With whom we've lived in love;
But ah! what tongue can tell the woes
That spring when friends become our foes,
And all our peace remove?

The world I covet not—nor will I bow
In meek submission to its law;
A searing stamp it writ upon my brow,
Ere little of its ills I saw.
Against its hollow, artful schemes
My soul would still rebel;
It never *is*, but always *seems*
A friend, while baseless are its dreams,
The busy mind that swell.

Let Disappointment with her horrors come,
And cold Desertion inly pain,
I'll murmur not—but evermore be dumb,
And cease of evils to complain.

But when my earliest hopes decay,
My soul burns with regret;
And well my heart may pine away,
And faint and fail the weary day,
For how can I forget?

Glen Urquhart.

WOULD that I clomb again the heathy hills
That proudly tower around my Highland home!
Oh! would I heard again the tinkling rills
Among the mountains where I loved to roam!
Or, by the Ness, to watch the snowy foam
In wildest fury lash against the shore,
Or mid old Castle Urquhart's ruins, from
The blushing Morn till sober Eve, explore
For relics of the past, and memories of yore.

Oh! land of towering crags!—home of my sires!
How heaves my bosom at thy sacred name!
How thrills my soul, with all their wonted fires,
At records of the past;—those deeds of fame
That still the patriotic soul inflame,
And teach how he, with iron grasp, may hold
Heaven-chartered Liberty! I love to claim
Kindred with those heroic bands of old,
Whose memories shall live when perish brass and gold.

Glen Urquhart, from thy woods beloved I roam,
Yet never, never can I thee forget;
I hover still around my mountain home,
For in my heart its every nook is set;
But recollections of the past beget
Sad thoughts of thee, and start the thoughtful tear;
While mid the city's din, immured, I fret,
And wish me on some lofty peak to hear
The Borean blast awake wild music in my ear.

When I recall the happy hours I've spent,
Glen Urquhart, on thy dusky mountains wild;
When to the past my anxious thoughts are bent,
Before me swim those haunts that oft beguiled
My boyhood's prime—whether in Summer mild,
When Nature bloomed with Flora's flowerets gay,
Or, when the savage Winter sternly smiled
Amid his furious storms and withering sway—
Alike I feel the charm that steals my soul away.

Can I forget the witching solitude
Of Corriemonie and its waterfall?
Or huge Mealfourvonie, with cloudy hood,
That seerlike stands, when Even wraps her pall
Around his aged form, sublimely tall;
Majestic mountain! oft I've wondering cast
Mine eyes upon thy brow, when the storm's brawl
Gave thee a tongue, or when enshrouded vast,
And wished that thou could'st tell some secrets of the past.

Glen Urquhart, nurse of all my early years,
Thy cloud-crowned mountains and thy deep woods lie
Sublime before my gaze. My heart reveres
Those monuments that taper to the sky,
Around whose heads I've seen the lightnings fly,
And heard the thunder spend, in vain, its power;
Immoveable they stand, and still defy
The wrath of storms that ever round them lower—
So firm be love of mine for thee till life's last hour.

TO —

THE Queen of Night shone in the starry skies,
When at thy feet I lay,
And sought for love in those deep azure eyes
That lent a lambent ray.
I could not trust my traitorous lips to speak
How dear thou wert to me,
The lisping of my soul, alas! were weak,
While fond I gazed on thee.

What then to me were charms of starry Night,
While at thy feet I lay?
A holier orb burst on my upturned sight,
And reft my soul away.

Oh, how my panting soul then wellèd up!
I dreamed of worlds above,
Where happy spirits quaff the nectared cup
Of never-dying love.

And o'er me thou didst bend those eyes that spoke
The language of the soul;
And in my bosom's deep recess awoke
Those thoughts that spurn control.
'Twas thus, in youth's sweet prime, a paradise
Of heavenly bliss was mine;
But ah! 'twas transient; for those love-lit eyes
Waxed cold and ceased to shine.

Another came, endowed with fairer face,
But with a subtle guise;
His oily words did all thy soul embrace,
And taught thee to despise.
But years have passed—to me long years of pain,
Since thou vow'dst to be mine;
Now, all is lost, and I can ne'er again
Hope ever to be thine.

Alas! I see thee to another wed!
I thought that thou wouldst be
The sharer of my home, and there to shed
The light of life on me.
But no,—it could not be; I did but dream,
Thou dear, deceitful one,
And hoped—hoped but to see the darkling beam
Encloud the joyous sun.

Farewell, farewell! and may thou never know
 The pang of sorrow deep!
 Ah! may thou never seek the couch of woe,
 In solitude to weep!
 'Tis past! but still I will remember thee
 Until life's sun be set;
 And mid the uproar of life's stormy sea
 I'll never thee forget.

Rome.

FRAIL man may plot, and his mad schemes succeed,
 And for a season wreath his brow with fame;
 But, who'll revoke what Heaven has decreed,
 Or, when Omnipotence, in car of flame,
 Among the nations vindicates His name?
 Ah! who will *then* presumptuously arise
 To question the Omnific King, or claim
 The cursed prerogative to tyrannise
 O'er Heaven-chartered rights, and Heaven's laws despise?

Belshazzar sate in his ancestral hall,
 And 'round him couched his sycophants so bland;
 His heart was flushed, and at his every call
 The menials crouched;—he gave the dread command
 To bring the vessels of robbed Judah's land;—
 To what will not man's daring soul aspire?—
 They're brought:—But, lo! upon the wall a hand
 The King discerns—'tis Heaven's righteous ire
 That writes his empire's doom in characters of fire.

Come, Papal Rome, and thine own doom behold ;
'Tis chronicled in heaven, and that day
Of retribution prophets have foretold
Shall be revealed ;—sooner shall pass away
The heavens and earth into chaotic sway,
Than unfulfilled remain what has been spoke
By the Eternal. Rome He shall repay
For Martyr blood she shed, when is awoke
His vengeance terrible with wild volcanic shock.

As fell Belshazzar in his boasted might,
So thou, proud Queen, shalt ignominious fall ;
Even now, around thee the deep folds of night
Do gather, and through chapel, tower, and hall,
In whispers audible, the wrathful brawl
Calls for repentance ; but, alas ! too late !
The Vatican still stands—its turrets tall
Still tower defiant up to Heaven's gate,
And Rome exultant boasts her prized Pontificate.

But Heaven has decreed the fatal hour—
'Tis registered upon the fadeless page ;
And when upriseth, in His awful power,
The Prince of Salem, ah ! who can presage
The fury of His wrath, when He will wage
Against the seven-hilled Queen, whose fall shall be
As certain as when Media did engage
Against Belshazzar ! but more dread to see
The ruin of that pile which spurned high Heaven's decree !

Stanzas.

A LONELY heath I wandered o'er,
'Twas Summer's gorgeous noon,
But ah! no wood—no mountain hoar—
No streamlet's dreamy tune
Was there!—it was a barren spot,
Which seemed kind Nature had forgot.
I mourned, for all was seared and dead,
When lo! I spied a little flower—
I knelt beside the precious dower
That o'er my soul such rapture shed,—

And said, "On earth there's not a place,
However barren it may be,
But there some floweret we may trace,
Some beauty still may see.
The mountain steep—the shady wood—
The glen's unbroken solitude—
The surging sea's rock-beaten shore—
Are haunts oft rugged, steril, bare,
Yet beauteous flowerets blossom there,
If man would but these haunts explore.

"And there is not a drooping soul,
So desolate and sad,
But has some floweret to control
Its griefs and make it glad.

The darkling clouds may overcast
The sky, but will they ever last?
Ah, no! for soon the sun will rise
 To burst the gloom in all its might,
 And scatter o'er the earth that light
Which life and beauty there supplies.

“The heart may be surcharged with Care,
 The bosom writhe with pain,
Yet never fondle with Despair,
 Nor kiss her servile chain;
Let Memory her scrip unfold,
And with remembrances of old,
The fainting, care-worn spirit cheer;
 For, in each breast there is a rose,
 A comforter that brings repose,
When most of all we doubt and fear.”

Why should I heave the stifled sigh,
 When some bleak heath appears;
Though barrenness may reign, yet nigh
 Some little floweret peers,
And lends a grandeur to the sight,
As stars the dusky robe of night;
Then, upward ever let me look,
 And with my pilgrim staff in hand,
 Seek out that blissful spirit-land,
I read of in old Nature's book.

Lines

COMPOSED AMONG THE RUINS OF CASTLE URQUHART.

WHAT awful silence reigneth here!—
No step—no voice—no sound—
Steals in upon the pensive ear;
But Solitude profound,
Like Druid, sits upon her throne,
With Time's sear'd leaflets crowned.

Had these dilapidated walls
A tongue; yes, they could tell
What throngs have marshalled through these halls,
To the shrill pibroch's swell,
Ere Time their beauty had disrobed,
Or hymned their funeral knell.

I love thee much, old ruined pile,
Although thy head be hoary;
Imagination makes thee smile,
In thy primeval glory;
But, would thou couldst unloose thy tongue,
To syllable thy story.

Within thy old and crumbling shade,
I love, when Night hath set,
To mark what ravage Time hath made
On tower and parapet ;
While hoarded records of the past
Sad sorrowings beget.

I see thee in thy prime once more,
So flushed with power and pride,
When plaudits rang along the shore,
To welcome home a bride ;
And happy was thy feudal lord,
With Marion at his side.

Yes, thou'rt transformed, and through thy halls
I see a joyous train
Sweep gladly, as the pibroch falls
And rises in each strain ;
It is a happy bridal night,
Thou'lt never see again.

How many hearts with joy beat high
On that midsummer's eve !
And women's eyes beamed lovingly
As their glad breasts did heave ;
Ah ! 'twas a night that rarely comes
Such memories to enweave,—

With man's uncertain, short-lived bliss,
For all is transitive here.

Now, Pleasure's goblet we may kiss,
And then, anon, a tear
Will start unbidden from its cell,
And waken drowsy Fear.

Those happy hearts did little dream
That when the morrow's sun
Gleamed on Loch Ness, with golden beam,
Thy glass would be outrun,
And all thy glory passed away
Like his who kingdoms won.

Such was thy fate, at dead of night,
As old traditions tell ;
When joyance reigned, and hearts were light,
Up rose a fearful yell ;
And far among the hills that cry
Did loud and louder swell.

All was confusion—Ruin came !
The lake, the hills, the sky
Reflected back the maddened flame
That raged on furiously,
Till wing, tower, parapet, all fell
One heap, and such they lie.

But since that fatal night, old Time
On eagle wing has fled,
And thou, no longer in thy prime,
Dost bend thy hoary head ;

- Yet thou the long elapse of years
Hast proudly still defied.

And though thou be decrepit now,
With the big load of years,
There is writ deeply on thy brow
A mark my heart reveres;
And in thy presence I do feel
As one that Heaven nears.

Farewell! though beauty now be fled,
Sublimely thou dost stand,
With ivy wreathed about thy head,
By Time's paternal hand,
As if thou wert some seer returned
From the dim spirit-land.

Love Ever.

A MAIDEN leaned upon the window sill,
What time the sun was sinking in the West,
And scenes of bygone years her mind would fill,
That robbed her bosom of its peaceful rest.
She gazed upon the stars and on the moon,
But ah! with what a melancholy eye!
With her sad soul alone did she commune,
And ever murmured, with a heavy sigh—
Love never, maiden, never!

And still the maiden sat engulfed in woe,
While down her cheeks were coursing pearly tears;
With bitter sobs her breath would come and go,
Sprung from that grief which was beyond her years.
In vain for her the stars sent forth their light;
Or zephyrs played the downy leaves among;
No charm was there in all the wealth of Night
To wean her from the sorrow-laden song—
Love never, maiden, never!

“What sorrow, maiden, agitates thy soul,
And from thy bosom scares the dove of peace?
Oh! dry those sorrow-nurtured tears that roll,
And let thy sadly plaintive wailings cease.
Brood not upon thy wrongs—above them rise,
Whatever be their magnitude or pain;
Our blessings often meet us in disguise,
And wound, when peace they would restore again—
Love ever, maiden, ever!

“Oh! foster not that feeling of distrust,
’Twill make thee wretched, maiden, evermore,
And be within thy bosom as the rust
Of deepest sorrow—withering the core.
Love is the star with which the earth is lit,
And cheers and strengthens through our term of years;
’Tis better for to feel our bosoms smit,
Than never—though Love bring us bitter tears—
Love ever, maiden, ever!

“ Love is a ladder of the purest gold,
Which reacheth from our earth to heaven high ;
The leaflets of Affection *here* unfold,
But *there* expand—and wither not nor die.
Earth's tawdry passions of inconstant hearts
But mock the truer, holier name of Love ;
Oh ! lift thy soul above man's subtle arts,
And be as the angelic host above—
Love ever, maiden, ever ! ”

The Blind Brother.

ALAS ! my brother, thou art blind ;
The eye no more delights the mind
With varied dyes ;
Yet thou hast still that heart of love
Which ever feels—though what may move
In darkness lies,

But I will be thy faithful guide ;
In Anabell thou canst confide
To lead the way ;
I'll all thy little cares dispel,
That may thy tender bosom swell
The live-long day.

I'll lead thee to our favourite bower,
Where oft we've passed the sunny hour
 With sweetest song;
Those joyous days we'll live again,
And rob thy blindness of its pain,
 The woods among.

The linnet and the blackbird's notes
Will charm thee in those happy spots,
 Though thou art blind;
The daffodil, the pink, the rose,
With all that Flora's bowers disclose,
 For thee I'll find.

Then, brother, lean your arm on mine—
We'll forth, and love-wreaths I'll entwine
 In the green wood;
Despond not, for our Father's kind;
In all His works poor man will find
 Beatitude.

Though darkness on thine eyeball lies,
And thou see'st not the azure skies,
 Yet He, thy tongue—
To offer Morn and Even praise,
And prayer, which every grief allays—
 With speech has strung.

I Think of Thee.

WHEN Morn bursts forth with rosy hue,
And decks the woods and dells with dew ;
When choral warblers trill their lay,
To cheer the infant heart of Day ;
When balmy sweets perfume the air,
And Nature looketh wondrous fair ;
'Tis then alone I wish to be,
And sweetly, love, to think of thee.

When the lone evening hour comes on,
And Day adown the West hath gone ;
When choral warblers cease to sing,
And silence broods o'er everything ;
When nought is heard upon the hill,
Save the soft murmurs of the rill,
'Tis then alone I wish to be,
And sweetly, love, to think of thee.

When every earthly prop and stay
Glide from my feeble hold away ;
When of all peace I am bereft,
And nought to cheer my soul is left ;
When hopes expire, and Faith is faint,
And life is dark with Sorrow's plaint,
Oh then to solitude I flee,
And sweeten life with thoughts of thee !

But when some noble purpose heaves
My bosom with a joy that leaves
A gladness rare, which has its birth
In something purer far than earth;
And to my soul a peace is given,
That draws me nearer unto heaven,
Yes, then alone I wish to be,
And share my happiness with thee.

When harsh Disease does rend my breast,
And haunt me with unquiet rest;
When my lorn heart is racked with pain,
And Peace seems not to smile again;
When all around is cold and dull,
And my lone soul is sorrowful,
Oh, how I fondly wish to be
Watched over only, love, by thee!

Woman.

ADAM through Eden held his lonely way,
With soul alive to all of earthly bliss;
He noted well how mate with mate did play,
Of bird and beast—and felt a deep abyss
Yawn in his bosom, as if happiness
To him were circumscribed; he keenly felt
To be alone was utter wretchedness;
If from his grasp Earth's joys away should melt,
Without one loving voice to soothe him where he dwelt.

But there was One who marked his languid eye,
And knew the yearnings of his inmost soul;
Stern trial, Solitude, stript of the tie
That hallows man and wife. Yet, onward roll
The moments in inquietude; the whole
Of Eden rung with joy—not Adam's heart.
A bitter feeling of an inward dole
Pursues him ever; still he walked apart,
In search of that which Love alone could e'er impart.

At length his Maker listened to his prayer—
Gave him the fruitage of his fond desire;
When Eve was led before him, richly fair,
A meet companion, whose smiles would inspire,
And fan into a blaze Devotion's fire.
Adam stood speechless—wonderment imprest
Its seal upon his lips;—could he aspire
To word his thanks? No; mark that heaving breast,
As woman Eden crowned with happiness and rest.

Oh! rich and lasting boon of Heaven's love—
Woman! what raptures circle round thy name!
What radiant seraphs from the worlds above
Are waiting on thee—and what stars of flame
Keep nightly vigils, ever since thou came
To glad the heart of man!—let me essay
To strike the lyre, and may its numbers frame
A choral wreath to garland Woman's sway,
As she, with purposed soul, holds on her mission way.

Woman! to God, next best of names—thy power
Lurks in the liquid lair of those sweet eyes;
Thy smiles enchain—e'en from the infant hour
To full-bloomed maidenhood—alike the ties
Of Beauty make men slaves. What heart denies
The witchery of thy smiles?—that heart is stone,
Which Love's affectionate appeal defies.
To such, alas! life's rarest boon's unknown,
And feel not what's to be companionless—alone.

I see thee stand in all thy pristine glory,
So modest, meek, and beautiful in mien;
What heart has not been ravished with the story
Of Eden, and thou crowned its floral queen!
But years have passed, and still on earth thou'rt seen,
And owned the paragon of all that's good;
Pursue thy mission—and what thou hast been
In days of old, be still—until subdued
Be those that would oppose the power of womanhood.

Thou gentle star, that gilds the sky of life!
Whose cheering beams dispel the deepest gloom;
And whether we call thee girl, or maid, or wife,
Thou comest all smiles our bosoms to illumine.
And Oh how lovingly thou canst consume
Those dark and bitter thoughts that man assail,
When wan Disease leads downward to the tomb!
When earth recedes, and wildering fears prevail,
Oh thou art ever near to hush the mourner's wail!

Behold the mother! with what tender care
She watches o'er unconscious infancy;
With what solicitude of soul, in prayer,
She pleads for days, her darling child to see
Merge into manhood; and Oh, haply he
An honour to his kind, then what a joy
O'erflows the mother's heart,—*that yet to be*,
The future of her hopes! May no alloy
E'er fall upon her soul, its visions to destroy.

Oh Woman! thou the young impell'st to dare
The awful conflict on the steep of Fame;
Amid the direst struggle thou art there
To cheer, and echo answers back thy name—
While the full music sets the soul on flame;
When lo! the conquest wreath is at thy feet,
And man all humbly stoops thy praise to claim,
If thou, perchance, shouldst smile upon him sweet,
And dower his yearning soul with Paradise complete.

But fairer far when bending o'er the form
Of helpless anguish and unkind disease;
When fond Affection's accents calm the storm
Of wildest fancies that the bosom seize,
'Tis thine to bind the head, and gently ease
The fretful spirit, and lone vigils keep.
Thou seek'st no rest, if haply thou canst please
The childish heart of Age,—and Oh how deep
That love which can rejoice and weep with those that
weep!

Song.

SMILING happy in life's morn,
Strangers to our coming fate,
Brightest prospects all adorn,
While our bosoms feel elate;
But our sky is soon o'ercast,
When descends Misfortune's blast;
Compass lost and canvas riven—
O'er a raging sea we're driven.

But behind the murky cloud
On us smiles One from above,
And louder than the thunder loud
Swell the accents of His love.
From the wild and hungry wave
He the foundering barque can save;
And when storm and danger past,
Safely harbour us at last.

Song.

MY home is in the North,
Where mountains cleave the sky,
And eagles sally forth
With fiery-flashing eye;
And the wild torrent's roar
Sounds grandly on the ear,
And wavelets on the shore
Murmur music ever clear.

The cot far down the glen
Still to my heart is dear,
While Memory's piercing ken
Oft starts the bitter tear;
But though I wandered far
From scenes o'er which I'd roam,
True, as the polar star,
I'm to my Highland home.

LINES.

THEY tell me 'tis Summer, that Winter is gone,
That trees, and the flowers, and the fields are in bloom,
But ah! they think not what a woe-nurtured tone
Such thoughts will awaken, my peace to consume.
I know it is Summer; at Morn's early dawn
I hear the blythe lark carol high in the air,
And I think of the time when I roamed o'er the lawn,
When blebbed with mine was the lark's matin prayer.

Ah! when will such happiness come back again?
When will I, as once, 'gladly welcome the Morn?
Alas! e'en the thought my heart pierces with pain,
And yearnings for Nature my bosom have torn.
Oh give me once more both the woods and the streams,
And let me inhale the wild chorister's lay,
And all unchecked revel through Shadow-land's dreams,
Where vision on vision trips grandly away.

Hope whispers I'll welcome sweet Summer's return,
And wander at will through the woodlands once more;
Ah! soon may it come, as here inly I mourn,
And long for the gloamin' wood-musings of yore.
Now, open the window and let the full tide
Of linnet and blackbird's song swell on mine ear;
And Flora I'll see richly robed in her pride—
So gorgeously garlanded Queen of the year.

Hope, the Guiding Star of Life.

HOPE, the guiding star of life,
Cheers the heart when pressed with care;
Sweetly mid the direst strife
Whispers, Courage—Don't despair!
Droop no more with pensive brow,
Have a heart to dare and do;
Clouds may be as dark as now,
But the sun will soon break through.
Trust to-morrow's happy smile,
Joy and peace to all 'twill prove;
Nobly work and ills beguile,
With your motto—live and love!

Sorrow's hand is damp and cold,
Disappointments chill the soul;
But arise, with bosom bold,
And your destiny control.

Courage, then, and upward climb,
Never list the voice of fear ;
Onward, onward through all time,
Never shrink, but persevere.

Trust to-morrow's happy smile,
Joy and peace to all 'twill prove ;
Nobly work and ills beguile,
With your motto—live and love !

Self-Commune.

AH ! dark and gloomy is the night of sorrow !
When not one cheering star illumines the sky,
And Hope, in vain, points to the coming morrow
To lift the soul and wing its thoughts on high ;
When all around, as far as we descry,
Deep darkness sits upon the brow of Night,
And the sad soul still heaves the troubled sigh
That tells of the protracted, deadly fight
Within, 'tween hope and fear, 'tween darkness and the
light.

Faith, thou art strong, thine eagle eye can soar
Above each cloudlet, be it e'er so dark ;
No danger can thy gifted might o'erpower,
Or make thee, for their arrows, but a mark
At which to shoot ;—thou, like the daring lark,

Lovest not the earth, but rather heaven's sphere ;
Through the vast sea of space thy bounding barque
Steers gladly on, while swells thy song so clear,
With thee may I arise, and spurn earth's every fear.

Faith, be my shield, and so I shall defy
Whatever may my bosom's peace assail ;
Here, in this weary world, we weep and sigh,
Where withered hearts can tell no idle tale
Of suffering and woe, which well might pale
The rosy cheek, and touch the callous heart ;
But wherefore should earth's sorrows make me quail,
When they are sent in love? each barb'd dart
But tests my faith, and would some balm of heaven impart.

Be strong my heart ; as day succeeds the night,
And clothes the earth with teeming life again,
So shall depart whatever now may smite
And rack the bosom with a burning pain ;
Though Darkness and grim-visaged Doubt may reign,
Their potency shall soon veer to a close ;
Then all shall feel their faith was not in vain,
Against such cruel and deceptive foes,
Who'd rob us of our peace, and stab our calm repose.

My Mother's Chair.

By the cosy ingle's side is a dearly hallowed spot,
That, let me roam where'er I may, can never be forgot :
With it sweet memories arise to swell my beating heart,
While oft the gush of feeling make the tell-tale tear-drops
start ;

For round that spot in youthful days were hushed my
childish fears,

And those sweet tones of love, methinks, still linger in
mine ears :

'Twas there I felt a mother's love, and lisped my infant
prayer,

As trustfully I bent my knee beside my mother's chair.

Oh ! blame me not—that hallowed spot

Shall ever be my care ;

And never through life's term forgot

Shall be my mother's chair.

I've wandered through this weary world full oft with
sinking heart,

And felt the bitterness of woe that springs from Sorrow's
dart ;

But, that one spot has given hope to brave the fiercest
strife,

And safely steered my barque across the stormy sea of
life.

Alas! that chair is vacant now, and memories will swell
My heaving bosom as I think upon her last farewell!
But never shall my heart forget the words once breathed
there,

When mother's eyes I closed—and wept—beside my
mother's chair:

Then, blame me not—that hallowed spot
Shall ever be my care;
And never through life's term forgot
Shall be my mother's chair.

With tear-dimmed eyes I've watched the leaves fall from
the drooping trees,

As Autumn through the woodlands stalked with death
in every breeze;

Yet, such is life—our Summer prime is often lost on
toys,

Without one thought of that which comes, and all our
hope destroys:

To-day we're flushed with sunny hopes—to-morrow sees
them die,

And all our airy castles wrecked or flown as visions fly—

Such thoughts will come, as here I stand with brow o'er-
wrought with care,

And think of all the dear ones gone—beside my mother's
chair.

Oh! blame me not—that hallowed spot
Shall ever be my care;
And never through life's term forgot
Shall be my mother's chair.

The Martyr's Grave.

FAR from aught of habitation—far from busy haunts of
men,
Mid the wild and ferny moorland, in the secret of the
glen—
There's the Martyr's lonely resting marked by ivied, mossy
stone,
Tells the wanderer of the Faithful in the ages by and
gone.

'Bove the patriot Martyr's resting is a stone uncouthly
'graved,
Telling of the cruel sufferings and the trials he had
braved ;
Severed long by tyrant power from his children, wife,
and home,
Doomed an exile and an outcast—forced the lonely glens
to roam.

'Gainst Despotism he most bravely warred and made the
Tyrant quake,
Till a Judas-friend betrayed him—led him to the Martyr's
stake ;
Though outnumbered and forsaken in the hour of deadly
strife,
Patriot-like he stood unconquered, till with freedom closed
his life.

Thus I wander through the wildwood, 'mong the glens,
on mountain sod,
Live again with Scotia's Martyrs—with them kneel to
Scotia's God ;
Who'd e'en now dare ban my freedom, when such scenes
my soul inspire ?
Back ! ye cringing, blood-stained cowards, Martyr deeds
my bosom fire !

Never be the past forgotten—prize it more than first-
bloomed love,
And our Martyrs be as beacons pointing to the rest above ;
'Tween the leaves of sacred Memory let us cherish every
name,
And point out to coming ages—these our heroes—sons
of Fame.

An Evening Reverie.

THE night was fair as night could be,
In luscious Summer's prime ;
The sky glowed a phosphorous sea,
And threw its mellowed tints on tree,
On mountain, and on plain.

The full, broad harvest moon illumed
The star-embroidered sky ;
While zephyrs odorous perfumed
The air, and ills were all entombed—
What heart so sad, as sigh ?

The scene entranced ;—I wandered on,
Unconscious where I went ;
Within my bosom an unknown,
A strange, mysterious thing had grown,
And with my thoughts was blent.

I heeded not the star-girt sky,
Nor yet the full-rimmed moon,
Nor zephyr's balmiest, softest sigh—
That unknown guest was ever nigh,
And *would* with me commune.

And still I wandered on, until
Grown weary, sick, and faint :
'Twas on the summit of a hill
I stood, and heard the tinkling rill
Murmur its lone complaint.

Beneath an old oak's gnarled shade
I lay me down to rest ;
When stealthily began to fade
The moon, the stars, the hill, the glade,
As gentle sleep carest.

But ah ! I was not all alone
Upon that quiet hill !
From Dreamland came a form, a tone
Which I, fond fool, had called my own,
And oft my soul did thrill.

Upon my visioned eye there rose
Sweet scenes of former days,
When trustful love gave sweet repose,
And I was glad as one of those
Who mid Elysium plays.

Methought I saw a youthful pair
In silence walk along ;
The maiden was a floweret rare,
And yet she was not wondrous fair
As breathed in poets' song.

She loved, and was beloved again,
How deeply, none can tell ;
No cloud arose, as yet, to pain ;
One growing thought their souls enchain,
Knit by Affection's spell.

And he, who stood beside the maid,
Had seen more Summers sear ;
He oft with heaving breast essayed
To mould in words the thoughts that played,
And banished every fear.

And they were happy—in each heart
Was Love's confiding trust ;
As yet, there flew no envious dart
From Disappointment, to impart
Aught of Doubt's cankering rust.

And oh! what agony of soul
Was in their night's farewell—
What tears of grief did wildly roll—
What sobs they could not well control,
Would deep, and deeper swell!

Yet they must part, alas! the fate
That could such fond hearts sever:
They were so happy, so elate,
That now 'tis pain and fears await—
To part—perchance for ever.

As mists recede from off the hill
Before the rising sun,
So vanished they, and all was still—
No sound came, save the dripping rill,
To cheer the lonely one.

And I was saddened with the sight—
Upon my soul a fear
Would ever come—not e'en the night,
So rich in all that can delight,
Could my sad bosom cheer.

How much of life was here unrolled?
I often asked my heart;
With brass is mixed life's purest gold,
And *life*—the truth has long been told—
Is meeting but to part.

Sonnets.

I.

THE hoarse-voiced thunder wildly boomed from far,
And startled Nature in her calm repose;
With troubled aspect from her couch she rose,
Alarmed at the fierce elemental war;
Egyptian dark came down—no beauteous star
To gem the shrouded sky, or to disclose
One ray of cheering hope that might oppose
Of what afeared. The lightning's vivid car
Careered incessantly from pole to pole.
Prone to the earth, in torrents fell the rain,
And then anon was heard the distant roll
Of thunder, and the earth was quiet again.
In such a storm how dreadful is the night—
How shrinks the soul at the appalling sight!

II.

I love the soul-refreshing calm of Night,
But more upon the hallowed day of rest;
'Tis then my heart, with weary care opprest,
Can muse on themes that ever yield delight;
Then freed from trammels and the weary plight
Of daily toil, I watch the moonbeam's crest,
The lofty mountain tops, and all invest
With regal splendours that allure the sight;
The scene, sublimely grand, enthralls my heart,
And wafts my thoughts beyond this earthly sphere;
I see no beauty in each puny art

Of man, when God's stupendous works appear;
And they to me His attributes display
More glorious still upon the Sabbath-day.

III.

I covet not the rich man's pillared hall,
For there I cannot meek Contentment find;
The downy couch, with luxury combined,
May for a moment please, but leaves a gall
In the bright jewelled cup;—its pleasures pall
The soul with sadness, and the spirits bind
In adamant chains. Give me the kind
And witching smiles of Nature as they fall
Upon the heart and fill the soul with bliss
Of pristine purity: for me to rove—
Where Flora's flowerets amorously kiss
The parent stem—and teach man how to love,
Is Paradise;—where pleasures ever pure
For me a cup of happiness secure.

IV.

Cartha! I ever love to roam along
Thy woody banks, and feel the cooling breeze
Upon my burning brow;—it gives me ease,
And soothes the heaving breast. The warblers' song
And Nature's beauties pleasantly prolong
My pensive steps; for here all strive to please
With bounties, such as can the soul appease,
When thus recumbent thy sweet shades among.
I love the ripple of thy gentle stream,

And fairer seems it, as the moonbeams pale
Profusely fall, enchanting as a dream,
Or legend in some fabled Eastern tale.
Cartha—roll on and wed the flowing main,
While here I struggle with the giant—Pain.

V.

Who'd be a sycophant, with facile tongue,
That can each point the compass veers attain?
I'd spurn the man who'd give another pain,
And smile when Slander had its victim stung;
Breathes there a man whose bosom has been wrung
By Disappointment's soul-corroding chain,
And to retrieve some loss, whose soul could deign
To kiss the hand that had the weapon flung?
Oh! base, ignoble, alien to all
The deep emotions of a manly soul!
Say, what could recompense so great a fall
From all that should the free-born breast control?
Man, on thine honoured elevation stand,
And be, despite of gold, a noble of the land!

VI.

The half-spent coals send up a ruddy glare,
And flicker dimly on my chamber wall,
Like some loved image I'd again recall
Of former days, to banish thoughtful Care.
How can Imagination picture air,
And people once again the silent hall,—
Bid ever dearly-cherished accents fall

Upon the ear, and what is dark make fair !

But ah ! how transient is the vision's gleam
While melancholy preys upon the heart,

And nought of love e'er cheers the midnight dream
To bring a solace to the bosom's smart !
How shall it end ?—alas ! I cannot tell !
I only upward look, and hope all will be well.

VII.

MISFORTUNE.

Old shrivelled Hag, avaunt ! nor dare come near—

Thy bloated visage is my utter hate ;

Pout if thou wilt, and wag thy frosty pate,
But all in vain. What, wilt thou still appear,
And shuffle near me with that fiendish leer ?

No ; back, or dread my vengeance, curse of Fate !

How I abhor thee, foul, decrepit mate
Of human ills : thy hearing's dull, I fear,

Else thou might'st hear how heartily thou'rt curst
By those who loathe thy soul-detested name :

Still thou'lt persist, until we've felt the worst
Of thy black malice—out upon thee, Dame !
But hear me yet, old Hag, I'm not for thee,
So be thou gone, thou'lt never wheedle me.

VIII.

He died as dies the fool. No conscious fire

Of a hereafter lit his heavy eye—

No yearnings for those blissful scenes on high
E'er mingled in his talk ; and no desire
Had he to learn of Jesus, nor admire

The proof of love He gave when led to die
For man, and purchased him eternity,
That he might swell the rapt angelic choir.
Ah! Jesus and an after state, to him
Were things of little moment—scarce a thought;
And when around his couch thronged phantoms dim,
That chilled his heart with deadly terrors fraught,
His courage failed—the boastful coward cried;
But as the fool he lived, and as the fool he died.

IX.

THE DEPARTED.

Can this be death, and still so fair and sweet?
The vivid flush still mantles on thy cheek,
And there is in thine eyes Affection's meek
And purest language—eloquent, replete
In heartfelt pathos. Thou wast wont to meet
My home returning with as bland a smile
As now plays on thy lips, as if to wile
Me to a parting kiss. Alas! thou'lt greet
My steps no more, nor captivate my ear
With sweetest song: the grave will soon enclose
Thee from mine eyes, and I, left lonely here,
Will wail thy absence, and thy deep repose
Long to be mine. Alas! when will these eyes
Be closed in death to hail thee in the skies.

X.

Sleep on, my little Innocent, sleep on,
E'en if I could, I would not waken thee;
How beautiful in that simplicity

Which wreathes thy snowy brow! With wailing moan,
Like Philomel, I'll mourn not, though alone.

And yet, methinks, I could e'en wish to see
Those eyes again smile kindly upon me:

But, no! the wish is vain—my child is gone,

And will no more a father's bosom glad;
No more his artless prattle will I hear,

That had a charm to cheer my heart when sad,
And all is hushed my bosom held so dear.

Farewell! my son, we'll meet on yonder shore,
Where separation will be felt no more.

XI.

This is the lone churchyard; in deep repose

How many warring spirits are at rest?

Death to his bosom hath them firmly prest,
And none of human kind dare interpose.

We muse on death and grave; but what are those?

Are they man's enemies, who have opprest

His thoughts so long with secrets unexpressed,
And filled his bosom with a load of woes?

No; they are friends, but still he'll backward shrink,
And knows not how he cannot quash the fear

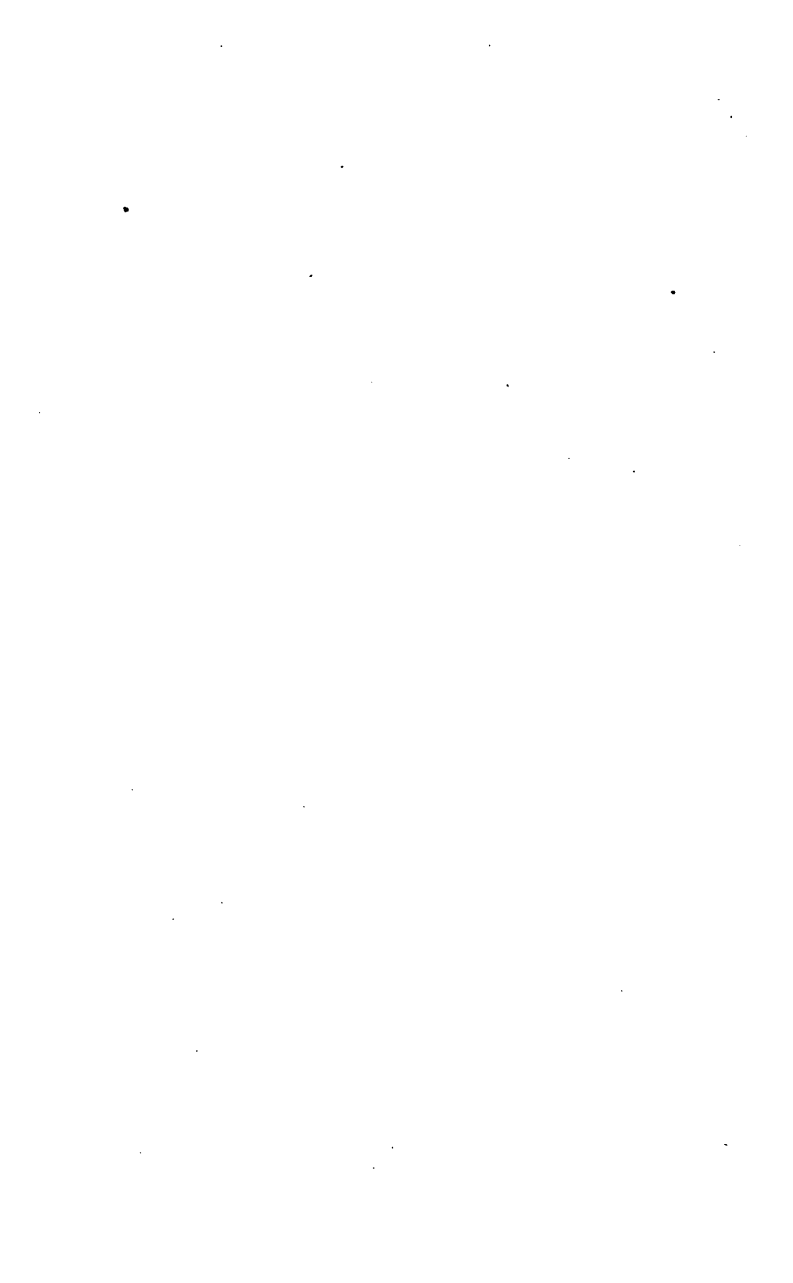
That sways his bosom as if on the brink

Of some huge precipice. Death's ever near!

The moment know we not, when hence we go,

To see and feel, what here we vainly strove to know.





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